W·HOLMAN·BENTLEY

THE·LIFE·AND·LABOURS OF·A·CONGO·PIONEER

BY·HIS·WIDOW·H·M·BENTLEY

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W. HOLMAN BENTLEY

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W. Holman Bentley.

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D.D., UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

THE

LIFE AND LABOURS

OF

A CONGO PIONEER

BY HIS WIDOW

H. M. BENTLEY

WITH A PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT, MAP, AND
SIXTEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

IT was with no little hesitancy that I complied with the request to write an account of my dear husband's life. There were so many reasons that made it almost impossible for me to describe with any fairness the character and work of such a man as he was, that I shrank from the task. But when, finally, more than one friend urged it upon me, I felt in a way constrained to do it, if but to show how much may be achieved by any one man, if only he be willing to place himself unreservedly in the hands of God, to be used by Him and for His glory.

One great difficulty that confronted me at the onset was that I had never met my husband until the year of our marriage. Happily I found two diaries of the years 1878 and 1879, which have helped me very much in my account of those years; and these, with his mother's recollections and the letters of friends, have enabled me to give an account of the way in which he was trained by God for his great life-work. Another

inconvenience was that his private correspondence had mostly been left behind in Congo, in the expectation of returning there after a reasonable absence on furlough.

My grateful thanks are hereby offered to my husband's early co-worker and friend, the Rev. H. E. Crudgington, for the incidents which he sent me of the early years, without which it would have been impossible for me to have given any details of their discovery of Stanley Pool.

There is a tendency in some circles to look down upon Missionaries as men who have adopted this life because they had no prosperous outlook at home. This idea is being dispelled by the many records of the achievements of the brave and devoted heroes of the Cross, and Holman Bentley's life's record deserves to rank amongst the highest, on account of what he was, as well as what he did. With his intense earnestness, his powers of concentration, his scorn for slovenly work, he might have earned success in any calling. A friend who knew him from earliest childhood, writes of him: 'He knew no failures;' and all Dr. Bentley's letters, received after his 'home-call,' are unanimous in their testimony to his gifts and graces. Yet, when informed that the University of

Glasgow proposed to confer on him the honorary degree of D.D., his surprise was so great that, in writing to a colleague, he expresses a fear that they will 'smile' at the announcement. That friend, writing after his 'home-call' says: 'On the contrary, we who knew him best felt how worthy he was of such an honour.'

His was no false humility, for modesty was one of his special characteristics. After Dr. Bentley's death, a friend in a letter of condolence writes: 'He was most beautiful in his character of charming courtesy and modesty. One would never guess from his manner how great things God had wrought through him. Perhaps this explains how He could so work by him.'

From all mission fields we hear the cry 'Come over and help us.' The fields everywhere are white unto the harvest, and the workers so few. Is there any calling so noble, so Christ-like as that of being, as Paul calls it, 'ambassadors for Christ'? Pathetic speeches are sometimes made about the missionaries 'laying their bones on a foreign shore' (as if it mattered where the bones are laid), and there is much talk of the 'sacrifices' made. Is this the way to regard it? Is this what He deserves Who died for us? 'Who can look the Master in the face and talk of "sacrifice"?' Dr. Bentley asks in one of his

early letters. In another letter he writes: 'I wish those at home knew what a grand wide door God has opened into dark Central Africa. I wish that they could understand that Missionary life, even out here, is much grander, worthier, than anything they are likely to do at home.'

It is largely, then, in the hope that this volume may be a stimulus to others, to be followers of Holman Bentley, even as he was of Christ, that the sacred task of writing it has been undertaken. If I may add a personal word, it would be to urge those who are free to go, to consider the call that comes to them in this book, and, to quote once more the words of Dr. Bentley himself, to 'strive earnestly to be, and do, what they will wish to have been, and done, when they review the past in the light of the Eternal City.'

H. MARGO BENTLEY.

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REV. WILLIAM AND MRS. BENTLEY,

Father and Mother of Holman Bentley.

The Rev. William Bentley, Baptist Minister at Sudbury, 1853; Ryde, Isle of Wight, 1867; afterwards at Loughton, Essex.

[*To face page* 1.

W. HOLMAN BENTLEY

Chapter I

Early Life and Home Influences

'*If aught of prophecy be mine*
Thou wilt not live in vain.'

WHEN on October 30, 1855, the good and kindly Baptist minister at Sudbury, Suffolk, gave God thanks for the new life which had come to his home, he little thought to how many the work of William Holman Bentley would become a blessing. From a letter, written many years after, it is clear that it was always his hope that his son would be called to the ministry of the Word, in which he himself found his 'greatest delight.'

Holman's father was the Rev. William Bentley, who came from the Midlands, and was educated for the Ministry at the Baptist College at Stepney, during the presidency of Dr. Angus. His first pastorate was at Sudbury, Suffolk, where he settled in 1853. In 1854 he married the widow

of the Rev. Piers Edmund Butler, youngest daughter of John Holman, of Sudbury. His ministry in Sudbury, where he was greatly beloved, was much blessed, and throughout his life he retained many valued friends amongst his first pastorate.

Holman's early years in Sudbury passed without the occurrence of anything specially noteworthy. Neither his father nor any one else seems ever to have anticipated a future of distinction for the lad, of whom the universal impression was that he was a 'good boy and delightful company.' He was so full of spirits and fun that no one was ever dull when he was about. An old servant of the family writes: 'I well remember how he would play at Chapel on a wet Sunday afternoon. He could not preach without a pulpit, and this was arranged by putting a tablecloth over two chairs, and woe betide us if we smiled at his imitation of his father. It was very real to him, and he would look very soberly at his brothers if they did not pay full attention. When alone with any one he would talk seriously about the Bible and good things, far beyond his years.' Truly, the 'boy is father to the man.'

Being the eldest of the minister's family, Holman was, even when very young, sometimes put in charge of his three younger brothers; and

his mother has often remarked that she never felt any anxiety when Holman was looking after the children ; he was so careful with them, and always seemed to know the right thing to do. I also remember her telling me that, when they went to school, the younger ones were gladly and confidently placed under his care ; and that very often, when they were ill, she used to trust him to give them the prescribed medicine.

The home influence was excellent. He was the son of the kindest, gentlest, and wisest of fathers—himself the descendant of many godly ancestors—and of a high-spirited, capable and energetic mother, born of an old and honourable family, whose descent may be traced back for several generations. With the watchful care of two such parents—intent on doing their very best for their sons, and never sparing themselves in any way, if they could be helped on—and remembering the promises of God to bless the children of those who fear Him, even to the third and fourth generation, one is not surprised that the sons who lived to manhood proved themselves men of worth. Much of Holman Bentley's success in his later life, and the success of his younger brother in business, may undoubtedly be traced to their home training.

Whilst they lived at Sudbury, Holman was

partly taught at home by his father. He also went for a short time to a school kept by a friend, and later on to the Grammar School of the town. This friend describes him as a 'studious and aspiring . . . earnest and persevering all-round boy.' This is quite in accord with his after-life. But for those good habits he would hardly have been able to get through so amazing a quantity of work that even his younger colleagues confessed they found it 'hard to keep up with his pace.'

In 1867 Holman's father accepted a call to the pastorate of a small church in Ryde, Isle of Wight, which up to that time had been meeting in a Hall. During the one year of his ministry there, the Church was raised to a self-supporting basis. The ministry at Ryde was quickly followed by a call to the pastorate of the church in Loughton, Essex, which he accepted, and Holman was now sent to the Nonconformist Grammar School at Bishop's Stortford, with his two brothers. Whilst there he passed the Junior Cambridge Examination in Latin, French, and Mathematics. It appears that at his school he was always in especial demand as a story-teller. Night after night the boys would make him weave for them wonderful stories of adventure and travel and hair-breadth escapes, which he made up as he went on, until he would fall asleep whilst telling

them, only to have a pillow or something thrown at him with the demand, 'Go on, Bentley! What happened next?' For five years the family lived in Loughton. Then the Rev. William Bentley gave up regular pastoral duties in order to undertake the Travelling Secretaryship of the Baptist Building Fund, for which purpose he removed with his wife and family to London.

When Holman was about fourteen or fifteen years old an appreciative member of the Church at Loughton, Mr. Thomas Whitley (of Ridley, Whitley & Co.), gave him a post in the firm's office, which he retained for some years. The experiences in a large house of business were not lost upon him, but proved very useful to him in later life. Holman subsequently became a clerk in the Alliance Bank, a position he filled until his acceptance by the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society for work on the Congo.

The date of his conversion is unknown. There does not seem to have been any stirring event or speech that brought about the definite change in his heart; but from a letter written after he had been a little time in Congo, it is evident that he must have been a child of the Kingdom even before he was aware of it himself. We read in that letter that he had desired to be a missionary ever since he was a boy at Loughton,

for 'that seemed to be the most holy, Christ-like life possible.' But he never dared to speak of his ambition. He hid the matter in his heart, as being too great an honour for him to aspire to. But the desire remained. How else can we account for a youth of seventeen, a simple bank clerk, choosing for his daily reading in the train the Hebrew Psalter and the Greek Testament? These are not the books one generally sees in the hands of young business men, and even the fact of Holman's father being a minister, and giving him evening lessons in those languages, was hardly sufficient to account for the choice. But the letter explains it. Sometimes he forgot the matter for a month, even for two or three, but it always recurred, and as years went on the desire grew stronger and more definite.

Holman Bentley was baptized in September, 1874, at the Downs Chapel, Clapton, by the Rev. T. Vincent Tymms. After he had joined the Church it soon became evident that he would not be a mere cypher. Dr. Tymms writes of him: 'From the first Holman Bentley showed a keen interest in the young men's Societies, and attracted my attention by his apt, but ever brief remarks. He shrank from speaking in meetings of any size, but it was curious to see how his shyness failed to keep him silent when the fire

burned, and it often did burn when great questions of principle were under discussion. His intellectual calibre became more manifest in written essays, and he was soon known as an original thinker, a terse, incisive, and often humorous writer, and one who spared no trouble in getting information, or in working up his material into logical order and good literary form. Before long he was made the Secretary of the Literary Society, and in this capacity rendered conspicuous service.'

After consulting with his class teacher, Mr. Josiah Baines, of whose influence one cannot speak too highly, Holman started on the path of seeking to win others to God. His free evenings were mostly spent in tract distribution. On summer evenings he would board the trams with his tracts; he would go down to the river Lea and get into conversation with the lads lounging in the fields there. In the winter he would buttonhole the young fellows who hung about the corners of the streets. He would follow those he was seeking to win for Christ into the public-houses.[1] This was indeed bearding the lion in

[1] The effort which commenced in this small way is now an organised branch of the work of the Church, and quite recently I heard that the Young Men's Missionary Prayer-meeting and breakfast started by Holman Bentley in those days were still kept up.

his den ; but with what results to others, God only knows. We have His Imperial Decree that '*My word shall not return unto Me void*, but that *it shall prosper* in the thing whereto I sent it.' We also know that He willeth not that any sinner should die, but that he should turn to Him and live, and we feel therefore that this work must have brought the blessing of Eternal Life to some.

Whatever this work may or may not have done for others, to Holman it was invaluable training. Indeed, his Foreign Mission labours were only a natural development of his attempts to benefit others at home. Of this home work, he once wrote : 'It is not well to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," unless we are willing to do the work to that end, which our Gracious Master does and will give us. We may not be able to go to the heathen abroad, but we are not thereby released from our obligation to the heathen at home.'

But the more Holman Bentley spent his time in seeking to rescue others from vice and sin, the more the desire grew to carry the 'news of salvation, accomplished and sure,' to the people who had no one else to tell them. In January, 1878, he seems to have had a good deal of talk with Abraham Eshoo, of Nestorian

fame, about going to Persia. From his diaries it is evident that Abraham was a frequent visitor at the Bentleys' home. We are told that Holman spoke of various ways of finding an entrance into Central Asia, and even considered the possibilities of service; but in the old diaries I find no mention of this, only that thenceforth Arabic became his daily study as he journeyed backwards and forwards to his desk at the Alliance Bank, and that his occasional Sunday watches there became times of prayer and preparation. The advice he gave boys in the letter already quoted—'Try hard to get on at school; learn all you can; get as ready as you can; then wait patiently, and, if it is the Master's Will, He will open the way'—was evidently a lesson from his own experience. However, Urumaia was not God's destination for him, as events proved.

He writes on January 29, 1878, that to do the will of God is what he most desires. Indeed one thing is very clear all through the diaries, viz.: his burning desire to spend and be spent in the Master's service. That these were not idle words may appear from a few extracts from his diary:—

'*January 4th.*—Tracts (250), Victoria Park and Homerton, very few people about Mare Street. Well received at a public-house at Homerton; a

man there told me he used to do the same thing once, being a teetotaler, but a man offered him drink, and he took it and had come to this.

'*January 7th.*—250 tracts. . . . Found Moore; had a long chat with him. He was ill when I called last time at his house. I urged him to give up drink as his only chance. I took him to Bedford Institute; he liked the place; I am to see him again.'

Another entry runs thus: 'Tracts; distributed about 60. Started intending to commence at the "Crown and Shuttle," thence Artillery Lane, &c., but got no further than the "Crown and Shuttle"; met there the little Dutch Jew I met last Sunday. He had read with much interest the tract I gave him then; also his children. I chatted with him long about Jewish customs, &c. He had never read a Psalm in English, though he knew the 27th Psalm, and often repeated it. I offered to give him a Bible, and on his expressing a wish, I promised to meet him on the 12th prox. He will give me a "mazzuzah." He told me that, after I had left last Sunday, a man read out to the people in the parlour a tract I had given. "It was such a beautiful story, and he read it so well." I took his address.'

In January I find the following: 'Took 300

tracts, returned with 100; went along Cambridge Road to the "Arabian" . . . and the "Adelaide." Chatted there, asked after "the old lady," and she came out. To Shoreditch to find . . . (the little Jew); showed him the Bible I brought him. Presently, some fellows came in who told him he was "gamutz," or I would make him so, and that he was cadging. I could not get on at all, so, after a long forbearance I left. He would like to have a chat if I will appoint a place. I wrote that I would meet him at . . . , but he did not turn up. It was a dreadful night.'

'*January 28th.*—On the way home I called on Moore. He said he had been to the Bedford Institute several times. His face was clean, and he looked better; wants me to go with him on Saturday to Bermondsey. I gave him 2s. 6d. to buy tools with. He is to repay on Saturday.'

'*February 9th.*—Took 350 tracts, and commenced at the "Salmon and Ball," Bethnal Green, where I had been refused once, and then continued up Bethnal Green Road. At Brown's "Three Horns" had a long chat with the publican himself; must see him again. Finished up at the "Crown and Shuttle."'

'*Monday, 10th.*—Called on H. H., 5, King's Court, B. A. Alley, Bunhill Row entrance through the Passage, beside No. 5, into backyard, and

up staircase to the top of the house. H. was out, but his wife related the family history. She was in a sad plight; had just pawned her cloak for rent. Her husband is a tailor. Gave her 2s., and told her to send her husband to the Bank in the morning. Heard Comber read his paper before Royal Geographical Society.'

'*Tuesday* 11*th.*—H. called, and Mr. R. gave him a job.'

Meanwhile the tide of Holman's life had turned Congowards. On Thursday, January 16th, Mr. Comber spoke at the Downs Chapel, and the following is the entry I find in Holman's diary:—

'Cold still very bad, but went in evening to Downs. Mr. Comber gave Missionary address. Good number present. He related his journey to San Salvador; collected £7 10s. Afterwards, while in the passage, Mr. Rickett asked me what I thought of Africa. I replied that it was a splendid field, and dilated on the opportunities it offered.

'"But what do you think of it personally; how would you like to go out?"

'"I should like to if I were the right material."

'"How do you know you are not? You should put in an application to the Committee, and let them tell you you are not fit."

' "That is easier said than done."

' "So are most things."

' "*Nous verrons !*" '

It is most probable that he told his parents of this conversation with Mr. Rickett, but there is no entry to show that it was at all seriously discussed; but on Thursday, 23rd, I read in his diary: 'On the way home I asked papa what he thought about Mr. R.'s suggestion. He said that he feared for my constitution and speaking powers.'

Finding, however, that the desire of his heart was to make the preaching of Christ his life work, Holman's parents decidedly favoured the idea of his going out under the auspices of the Baptist Missionary Society rather than that of going anywhere else on his own responsibility. His mother had read, however, that only young men of strong constitution could be accepted, and knowing that Holman was inclined to be delicate, hoped that her son would not be torn away from her to go and live and die in a foreign country. She had lately lost one son ; it was hard to give up another.

But at last the desire to give himself wholly to the work of God became so strong that one evening Holman told his father that he must offer himself for Mission work. With his father's

full consent, he had put on his hat and coat one Monday evening to go and consult his minister, the Rev. Vincent Tymms, who was a member of the Baptist Missionary Committee, about it, when the postman's knock was heard. Holman went to take the letters, and was handed one for himself.

It was from Mr. Vincent Tymms, suggesting that Holman should go and talk over the Committee's decision about establishing a Mission on the Congo, with a view to his offering himself as one of the pioneer party to go out with Mr. Comber. Was there ever a clearer case of 'preparation of the heart' and the 'call of God'?

All that is known of that interview is found in Dr. Tymms's biographical sketch: 'I see to-day how his face lighted up with joy, that he should be counted worthy of so great a trust. He assured me that the idea had been in his mind from the first mention of the project in the *Herald*. Nothing but a humble sense of his attainments and capacity had stood in the way. He had not been to college, and feared that this would be a fatal disqualification; but with eager delight he said, "If the Committee can take me as I am, I am ready, heart and soul, to go out." He then told me that in any case he was fully deter-

mined, if God permitted, to be a missionary to the heathen somewhere, and related the plans he had formed and the studies he had pursued.'

His application, Dr. Tymms says, was made 'in a somewhat hasty and informal way; but the Committee recognised in him a God-trained man, and one whose zeal could burn in quiet patience for years without being cooled. It was also found that he was a good linguist, and as highly cultured as most of those who pass through our colleges, and he was accepted with anticipations which years have amply justified.'

Chapter II

The Voyage Out

'Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife.'

TENNYSON.

IT was at the Quarterly Meeting of its Committee on January 15, 1879, that the Baptist Missionary Society, having before it the pioneer journey of Messrs. Grenfell and Comber, unanimously resolved to establish a Mission to the natives of the Congo, and accepted Rev. H. E. Crudgington, from Rawdon College, as one of the colleagues who should go out with Mr. Comber. At a special meeting on February 20th, Holman Bentley was also accepted for the Congo, together with Mr. J. S. Hartland, of Camden Road Church.

The party was desired by the Committee to be ready to start by the end of April, and the intervening weeks were busily occupied in preparation. Notwithstanding this, and the fact that he could not leave his desk at the Bank until March 15th, Holman found time to visit some of the people he was trying to help, and two of the Sunday afternoons were spent in tract distribution.

THE FIRST FOUR MISSIONARIES TO THE CONGO.

HOLMAN BENTLEY, H. E. CRUDGINGTON, J. S. HARTLAND,
T. J. AND MRS. COMBER.

[*To face page* 16.

Mr. Crudgington writes of those weeks :—

'I well remember our preparing for our work on the Congo, making out lists and putting down suggestions of things we might need, and curtailing these again to absolute necessities. They were days full of hopeful joy, and great anticipations of work in the future. We met in each other's homes, and one thing struck me very forcibly—Holman had a tender, sensitive heart, though strong in the consciousness of Divine leading in the step he was taking.'

There was a Valedictory Service at the Downs Chapel, Clapton, where the friends were invited to examine the outfit deemed necessary for the Congo. There was, first of all, the tent, with bed and blankets and wash-basin, soap, towel, &c. : everything necessary had to be provided. Then there was the camp-table, with a folding chair ; and the tin plates and cups ; and not only every requisite for meals, but also the kitchen cooking-pots and pans and kettles ; for the natives of the Congo do not prepare their food in a way that is palatable to European tastes. They never prepare their food in any other way than by boiling, excepting when they have some field-rats or locusts, which they put on a spit and roast ; or a plantain or a maize-cob, which they will lay in the hot ashes of their wood fires.

The last public function before the departure was an inspiring Valedictory Meeting at the Cannon Street Hotel, on Wednesday, April 23rd, at which Mr. Joseph Tritton, Treasurer of the Society at that time, took the chair—a meeting declared by all who were present to be 'indelibly fixed in their hearts.'

Of this gathering the *Freeman* of April 25, 1879, said :—

'The demand for tickets had been altogether beyond expectation, hundreds having to be refused after the utmost limits of the available accommodation had been anticipated. However, rather than disappoint so large a constituency as was actually represented by friends who arrived at the doors without tickets, the Committee very wisely arranged for an overflow gathering in another large hall in the hotel, the same speakers appearing at both, and Dr. Underhill occupying the chair. In all there could not have been fewer than two thousand persons at the two meetings, and hundreds went away unable to get entrance to either. Mr. Comber and the new recruits each spoke.' Holman's speech was characteristic of himself; on rising he said he 'could not express the mingled feelings of joy and thankfulness with which he rose before the meeting. It was not often the day-dreams of youth took substance.

But to-night it was the result of the hopes and earnest desires of twelve or thirteen years. During those years the missionary work had seemed to him to be the grandest cause to which life could be devoted—so grand that he scarcely dared to hope that it would be his high privilege to engage in such glorious work; but the interest deepened and the desire strengthened, the obstacles which lay in the way were removed, and all things seemed to indicate that the Master was calling him to the work. . . . It was his desire in going to Africa to preach Christ and Him crucified, and he said this, not as a mere formula to be used on such occasions, but because he knew it was the only hope of Africa or any other people. . . . They had the Master's command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. To disobey was not only to forsake the path of duty, but to forsake the path of life. It was in this they came to understand something of what Paul meant when he said, "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." . . . He counted it to be a very high honour that had been laid upon him, to be commissioned to carry the news of Christ's gospel into these unknown lands where it had never been named. . . . There

would be dangers and difficulties within and without. There would be obstacles and disappointment, but it was the Master's work, and He could preserve them amid all dangers. Christ had said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." What therefore need they fear?'

This was on the Wednesday; the next day the party left for Liverpool, from whence they sailed for Congo, in the 'Volta,' on Friday the 25th.

Henceforth Holman's diaries only furnish dates. In later years he used to say that he 'abominated' diaries, and that he had never found them anything but 'pious ejaculations meant for other people to read after one's death, interspersed with other people's wrong doings.'

Mr. Crudgington, in describing the experiences of that first voyage, says:—

'We had dropped our pilot in a calm sea and duly retired to our berths with great promises for a steady night and calm morning. But, alas for the vanities of such high hopes! The sea was not as kind to us as it might have been on our first big experience of sea life, and our hopes were somewhat shattered the next morning. When the steward came into our cabin with "Coffee, sir?" Bentley said he felt distinctly

"unhappy," and suggested that it was somewhat early to rise. But it was no use putting off the evil moment, and we duly got on deck. Bentley made himself comfortable in a chair with a rug round him; Hartland and I tried to walk up and down the deck, while he was chaffing us at our ghastly looks. He had said to me in Liverpool, "Lemons are a good thing, I believe, for sea-sickness; let's take plenty." We did so, and Holman sat in his deck-chair this first day from the early morning till the last thing at night with lemons in his lap, and sundry bits of dry biscuit. Only dire necessity made him move his position, and many were the jokes we had over our condition. There was a great deal of quiet humour in him, which did not readily show itself on the surface.'

But these uncomfortable feelings come to an end, at least to most, in a few days, and after that the time spent on the steamer was by no means a time of idleness. The party was daily busy studying Portuguese, for as that was the language most in use among the people on the coast in their dealings with the white men, until they could speak to the natives in their own tongues, Portuguese would be the only means of communication.

Evidently Africa's day had dawned, for Mr.

Arthington, of Leeds, had also addressed a letter to the A.B.C.F.M.[1] on the subject of a Mission to Congo; and so, on the same steamer which carried Comber, his wife, and his three new colleagues, there was a Mr. Henry Richards, with a colleague, who were also bound for the Congo, sent by the Livingstone Inland Mission.

Eight days' steaming brought the ship to Madeira on May 2nd, where the party were all anxious to air what they knew of the language. 'I can see Bentley now,' Mr. Crudgington writes, 'gesticulating with a crowd of beggars around him, who were hoping to touch the tender chords of his heart, giving them a coin and getting a linguistic lesson in return, in the way of conversation.'

On May 7th the 'Volta' arrived at Teneriffe, from whence they sent home glowing accounts of the voyage, and where they also transhipped on to the ss. 'Congo.'

'We had to stay at a Spanish boarding-house, and here our linguistic abilities were at a discount as far as Portuguese was concerned. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans; and the Spaniard would not attempt to understand our

[1] The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, founded in 1810, and, since 1870, practically representative of Congregationalists alone.

Portuguese. Bentley would prepare a nice sentence, but the good man or lady of the house would have none of it. But Bentley was not going to be done in this way, and remembered that he had a conversational book in six languages stowed away in a box. This must be raked out somehow, and at last was found, and sentences were studied and trotted out, as though we had come to make that place our abode. If we had stayed a little longer Holman would certainly have added Spanish to his languages.

'We were there for only a few days, but Holman's spirit of fun came out very vividly during that time. One little joke I remember. Hartland's antipathy was salad oil. Now at the Spanish hotel all the food was cooked in oil, and that not of the best Lucca. Holman did not object to it so much. As some things were more highly flavoured with it than others, we arranged to "go martyr" alternately in taking the first taste, and advising the others as to the food presented being likely to suit the English palate or not. But one day Bentley, bent on fun, arranged with me to express great satisfaction at some dish that was particularly highly flavoured with the ingredient. The dish duly arrived at Hartland, who, thinking he was safe, helped himself liberally, and his disgust can be better

imagined than described. But we all got real fun out of it.

'We had one little experience there which we never forgot, and used often to laugh about. The boarding-house we were in was purely Spanish, as I have said. It was not the place we should have elected to stay at, but the English hotel was full. We did not know much of Spanish life and ways, and certainly less of the language, in spite of the Spanish conversation book.

'Our sleeping-room was a very big one, almost like a small lecture-hall, and the door very insecurely fastened, so that any one could get in at night, and although we ourselves might be innocents, some of the specimens we had seen hanging about did not reassure us as to our safety. Holman suggested that I should put a chair against the door, and as my bed was close to it, I thought I should hear if any one came in.

'About midnight the chair began to move and creak, the door slightly opened, and a dark form appeared. I jumped out of bed, and Holman and Hartland used to say, in speaking of the event afterwards, that I collared the intruder. Holman, I know, was very emphatic that I nearly did damage to the poor man. But at this stage we wanted the help of Holman's book of six languages, and we brought it into use, and

I think nearly all the six languages also. After much gesticulation we managed to understand that the poor man's room opened out of ours, and that, having been out to some agreeable party, he was returning late, and trying to get to his room very quietly.'

They reached Sierra Leone on May 13th, where a number of Kroo boys were taken on board. Already Holman's affection for the Africans is shown, as, in a letter from Sierra Leone on his way out to Congo, he writes thus :—

'I like the look of the Kroo boys much ; fine, muscular fellows they are indeed. Art students would be glad to get them to sit for them. I wonder whether the Congo men are as fine a lot. I was rather disappointed with the blacks at Goree, but these fellows have made the race rise considerably in my estimation. I have no patience with men who cannot find traces of a common humanity in them. If they had received equal advantages, I think they could hold a higher head than some of the nations of Europe. There is no effeminacy about them. Blacks may be lazy, but who would not be when there is no impulse to energy and life? I think the physique speaks a great deal for a people.'

His earnest desire for the salvation of Africans

led him to take a special interest in the well-being of these Kroo boys, even to the extent of remaining on board to look after them when the ship touched at Gaboon. Thanks, however, to Mr. Hartland's kindness in relieving him of his charge, he was able to go ashore for a short visit to Mrs. Smith, the widow of the Rev. R. Smith, a missionary who had died there three years previously, and whom Mr. Bentley had mentioned in his speech at the Cannon Street meeting, before we left England.

Besides the study of Portuguese, Mr. Comber introduced the party to the mysteries of Nautical Astronomy, and Holman was very enthusiastic over this.

'We daily practised the taking of the sun at 9 a.m., and at noon, to determine the latitude and longitude of the ship's position, though sometimes,' as Mr. Crudgington writes, 'in the early days, our calculations would locate us some few thousand miles from where we ought to be! However, we toiled at it persistently until we were able to read correctly; and I well remember one or two occasions up in San Salvador when we tried to work out positions by the stars, and also to get a meridian altitude with an artificial horizon of treacle, seeing Holman lying on his stomach, and pegging

away day after day, as much with the desire to overcome difficulties as for the satisfaction of confirming the state of our watches, and getting the exact time. These trifles may not seem much in the telling, but they were all characteristic of the man (he was not one to leave a problem unsolved), and these studies helped us much on the first journey to the Pool, in locating positions and taking careful observations on the road, and fixing distances which, I am proud to say, have been proved correct.'

Holman makes no mention of these incidents, but in one of his letters he wrote about long chats with a Portuguese priest who was a fellow-passenger, 'who was utterly ignorant of our tenets, and asked many questions.'

On May 30th the ss. 'Congo' touched at Bonny, where they obtained their first impressions of real heathen degradation; and at last, on June 9th, they arrived at Banana, having had a voyage of six weeks and two days.

The river Congo is six or seven miles wide at its mouth. The banks on either side are flat and uninteresting for about forty or fifty miles inland, after which hills begin to rise on either side, and the scenery grows more and more imposing. There are about one hundred

miles navigable from the mouth. After that the river is a series of rapids and cataracts for about three hundred miles, until a broadening out, which Stanley named after himself. From Stanley Pool upwards the river becomes a wide, fine waterway for hundreds of miles; with great rivers such as the Kwa, the Ubangi, the Kwangu, the Aruwimi, and others, flowing into it on either side, some of these so big that the Rhine at Arnhem or the Thames near London seems insignificant in comparison. Small floating islands are constantly passing down stream, both on the Upper River and the Lower, and may be noticed even far out at sea. The amount of water carried by the Congo into the sea must be immense. It is said to be distinguishable for two hundred miles out, where the steamer's propeller will turn up the green sea water from under the brown that has come down from the Congo.

This recalls to my mind an incident connected with my first arrival at the mouth of the river. We had Aku, a little up-river maid, with us, who had been sent to England to take charge of a missionary's child travelling without her mother. Aku was very much troubled at the dirty look of the water, and the patches of scum on its surface.

We told her it was the Congo River. She was quite indignant. It could not be her Congo—that was clean. We asked her whether she never bathed in her country.

'Oh yes, plenty. Plenty times in one day.'

'Then, when the river goes past other towns, don't the people of those towns bathe too?'

'Plaps' (Perhaps).

'Well, are there not plenty more towns between your town and the end of the river?'

The insinuation dawned upon Aku, and the dialogue ended in a long-drawn 'Ou—— Misisi Benteley!'

As there was no hotel to go to at Banana in those days, Mr. Comber accepted the proffered customary hospitality of the Dutch trading house known as the A.H.V., (Afrikaansche Handels Venootschap), which had agreed to undertake the receiving and forwarding of their goods from Europe. There was not, however, room for the whole party to stay in the house itself; and the three young comrades had to sleep that night in the store, where they made careful investigations as to snakes, and where Holman nearly came off second best in disputing a scorpion's right to the place.

In the morning they tried ablutions in the

creek; 'but, the water being brackish, the soap would not go, and Holman began to talk of making a soap to meet the difficulties.' They did not stay long enough for him to start his experiments. The next day Holman and Hartland continued their journey by boat as far as Ponta da Lenha, the next stopping-place up river, also a factory of the A.H.V.

The first night at Ponta da Lenha they had a serious warning as to the possibilities attendant on the navigation of the Congo River.

'Two gentlemen from factories near by dined with us. At ten o'clock we retired to our room, but in a few minutes we were startled by an awful shriek. We rushed out thinking our dog had broken loose, but found, to our horror, that a crocodile had just seized one of the gentlemen with whom we had been spending the evening, and also his little girl, a pretty child. He was going to spend the night at the Portuguese factory, and as Ponta da Lenha is surrounded with creeks and marshes, it was necessary to go by canoe. He took a seat on a chair in the canoe, with his little child asleep under his coat, to shield her from the night air, when a crocodile suddenly appeared, and, striking him with his tail, knocked him out of the canoe, and carried him off with the little girl. The whole

place was in an uproar, canoes with lights were rushing about, every possible search was made, but not a trace of Senor Mota, or of Lucinda, the child, could be found. There were eight other people in the canoe, and among them the mother of the child. The poor woman screamed, and threw herself down on the sand, and wrung her hands. Her child had been taken under her very eyes! After some time the useless search was given up, and we retired to rest.'

It must have been a rather eerie sensation when the next evening, instead of reaching Boma as they had expected, they found themselves obliged to pass the night on a sandbank, surrounded by snorting hippopotami and well aware of the proximity of crocodiles.

Many parts of the great river teem with hippopotami. They are only killed for the sake of their meat. They are generally quite harmless, and unless attacked will not attack. They seem just happy to live and let live. They come out of the water in the evening to feed upon the coarse grass growing on the banks of the river. They are huge beasts as every one knows, their heads alone weighing sometimes as much as 500 lbs. As the creatures would, when killed, be too heavy and unwieldy to carry whole, they are

divided into parts. When the meat is taken home, it is cut up into strips and dried. Sometimes long strips of hide are twisted, and when dry become the terrible 'chicottes' of which we have heard so much lately in connection with Congo affairs.

The hippos generally go about in herds. They do not stay under water long, but come up occasionally to breathe, looking about them for a minute or so to see what is going on. It is then that the hunters get a chance to shoot at them. Their only vulnerable part is just behind the ear, which, of course, is very seldom presented, as they look towards you to see whether they have any cause for fear.

The only way to kill a hippopotamus to any advantage in deep water is to harpoon it. To shoot these animals in deep water is simply waste of bullets and beasts.

Crocodiles are also shot whenever possible, because they are dangerous enemies of human life. Many stories are told of people being seized while walking along the banks of the river, or even jerked out of a canoe by the lash of the creature's powerful tail. I will give some instances.

Once, when the missionaries were travelling in the steel tender of the 'Peace,' they noticed some-

thing at about five hundred yards, looking like a straight log being carried down in the strong current. In a short time they found it was approaching them, ploughing its way through the water at a rapid pace. Every one thought at first it was a hippopotamus. At fifteen yards Mr. Comber fired a Martini at it. Then they saw what it really was—a huge crocodile. Its head was as large as that of a hippopotamus, so that no one dreamed it was but a crocodile. Had they been in a canoe there would have been little hope of escape. Happily the bullet stopped the creature's progress, or it might have attacked the sides of the steel boat.

One day some of the station men were down at the water, when a crocodile had the audacity to snap at one of them. The man cried out to his companions, who caught hold of his free arm and tried to pull him on board. But the crocodile would not let go, and nearly dragged both his victim and the would-be rescuers into the water. There was a tug-of-war between the two parties, but happily the friends succeeded in keeping the man above the water, whereupon, after about five minutes' struggle, the crocodile let go. It was a narrow escape!

Another story of a crocodile at Stanley Pool does not end so happily. It was after we had

gone to live at Wathen that one Saturday afternoon the boys at the Pool were going down to bathe and wash their clothes as usual. Iye, a bright little Kiteke boy, who was generally one of the first in everything, ran down before the others to the water. A minute or two afterwards, when the other boys got down there, there was no sign of Iye to be found, except his clothes upon the bank. I forget now whether he had disappeared quietly, or whether any scream of his had drawn attention to the fact that he was surprised by a crocodile; but that is the only reason that could be given to account for his disappearance.

The question may be raised, 'How is it that he should be bathing in a spot where there are crocodiles?' With due care there is little danger with them. Crocodiles are very timid creatures, and will not venture easily into danger. The shouting, splashing, and frolicking of some dozen or more African boys bathing is quite enough to keep the crocodiles at bay. It was only Iye's running down to the water before the others that gave the brute a chance.

Dr. Bentley thankfully remembered many earnest talks he had had with Iye, quite reassuring his mind as to the boy's preparedness for sudden death.

Chapter III

To San Salvador

'Teach me to live! No idler let me be,
But in Thy service hand and heart employ,
Prepared to do Thy bidding cheerfully—
Be this my highest, this my holiest joy.'

E. BURMAN.

AS soon as Mr. and Mrs. Comber and Mr. Crudgington had caught them up at Ponta da Lenha, the party moved on to Boma, where they had a busy time unpacking boxes and cases, and rearranging loads for the road journey that lay before them. The evenings there were mostly spent in getting a Portuguese to play the guitar, and they would carry on with him a stumbling conversation in Portuguese.

From Boma they went to Musuku, their last stage up the river before starting for San Salvador. Here they had even greater opportunities for learning Portuguese, for the man in charge, a Portuguese, Senhor Santos, knew little or no English, and it was, as Holman said, 'an opportunity not to be lost.'

On July 2nd, Messrs. Crudgington and Bentley

started for San Salvador, with Mr. Comber accompanying them for the first day's journey, to put them up to a few things to which they were quite new, such as buying food from the natives, and giving presents to the Chiefs of the towns through which they passed.

San Salvador is the capital of the kingdom of Congo, which reaches from the mouth of the river Congo to the Dande River, which is about 180 to 200 miles northwards on the Atlantic coast. The territory goes as far as the boundary of Angola on the south. Inland the boundaries are less definite, but in the year 1887 we found people right away on the upper parts of the Kwangu who spoke Congo, and paid tribute to the King at San Salvador.

Their journey was well timed, for July is certainly about the best season of the year for travelling. The dry season usually lasts from about the third week in May to the third week in September. In June the hills are all covered with strong brown grass, from five to fifteen feet high, looking in the distance, as the wind sweeps over it, like fields of waving corn. Then come the bush fires which sweep down the tall, matted jungle grass, leaving the hills black and bare.

The first rain after that, which usually comes towards the end of September, is sufficient to

start the vegetation growing again, and soon the hills look green once more. As the lower part of the Congo River lies to the south of the Equator, the summer and winter there fall in exactly the opposite time of the year to ours. When once the rains start again everything grows very rapidly. I have seen plantains cut off one day, and have noticed that the inner part had grown to the length of two and a half inches within the next twenty-four hours. Thus by December, some grass will be as much as three or four feet high.

Yet to march under a blazing tropical sun, scorching although it is the 'cold' season, is not a little fatiguing; and, what with donkeys falling down in precipitous places, and other mishaps, it took them about five hours to do a six miles' march the first morning.

Holman writes thus about it: 'At the end of the first morning I thought, If all African travel is like this, it is a very hard lot!' But the midday rest and some food soon revived their spirits. Unfortunately the afternoon was even worse.

Mr. Crudgington gives the following account of that first afternoon :—

'One of the donkeys would roll over on to its back, and once he got into a deep rain-rut, with the bales on his back well wedged in. It was no joke to struggle with four legs kicking in the air,

and I can see Holman and myself at it now Most of our men had gone on with the cooking-pots and food and bedding; we were far behind with only a few men, and were both fagged out.

'At last, as darkness was coming on fast, and we seemed still far from the town we were making for, I said, "Well, there seems nothing for it but to sleep here in the jungle for the night." We rested for a bit; then Holman said, "I'll try and push on, and find the town; if necessary, you tie up the donkey, and I'll come back with help and fetch you." I had just determined to tie up the beast, when I heard Holman's cheery voice saying, "Come along, Harry, make another struggle. I can see the lights and smoke of the town; it isn't far ahead now!"

'We got to the town at last, and found Comber making arrangements with the chief for our putting up for the night. Dinner was not cooked yet, but a cup of tea was ready. After enjoying this we threw ourselves on a rug on the ground for a rest. The next we knew was some one telling us "chop" was ready, and we found we had had a good hour's rest and sleep.'

The road to San Salvador lay over long plateaux, up high hills, down through small rivers, over which there were no bridges, or at the most a trunk of a tree to do service as a

bridge. As to the rivers, their height varies very much at different times of the year. I have known a small river to rise ten feet with one month's rain. In the Congo River itself, there is a difference of about forty feet between the end of the rainy season and the end of the dry.

The effect of even one heavy rainstorm will perhaps be better realised from the following experience. On a certain day at one o'clock, having a midday halt and some food whilst on the road, we noticed heavy clouds. Had the man who carried our tent been there, we should have prepared to shelter at once; but unfortunately he had gone on, so that we were perforce obliged to continue the journey. By and by it began to rain heavily. The lightning played around us, as my bearers trudged along. Poor fellows, it was a heavy task! For my clothes and covering blanket were soaked with the rain, and there were some inches of water in the hammock. By the time we had descended into the valley the undergrowth was entirely flooded, and the water was nearly up to the arms of the shorter of my bearers. And when after an hour and a half's march, my hammock-bearers reached the little stream on the other bank of which we were to sleep, and where we could see our tent already standing out

pale against the dark sky, we found the river impassable! In fact, one of them in trying to ford it, to see whether it was possible to take me across, was carried off his feet by the rush of water, and would have been swirled away by the swift torrent had not his comrade dashed across a bend in the stream, and planted his stick firmly at the corner, and thus caught and saved him. My husband and the carriers had crossed over all right about twenty minutes previously, but the only method by which we could reach the camping ground was by forcing our way through the long, wet jungle on the sides of the banks up towards the upper part of the stream, until we came to some rocks, over which, with help from the other side, we managed to cross.

On another occasion one night's rain had turned a mountain stream into a rushing torrent, the water tumbling and foaming over huge boulders, with falls in its course of eight and ten feet.

On July 14th the pioneers arrived at San Salvador. The King sent a number of his relatives and retinue to meet them at a village about an hour's distance away. They came in grand style, bearing the Congo flag. The story of that flag is too interesting to be left out.[1] It was a gold five-pointed star on a dark

[1] I borrow it from *Pioneering on the Congo.*

blue ground. Having noticed that each of the trading houses had a special flag, the King had asked Mr. de Bloeme, chief agent of the Dutch house, to send him one. De Bloeme, not wishing to send a Dutch flag, lest any political significance should be attached to it, sent them a flag which his fancy dictated, a single star on a plain blue ground. As a strange coincidence, Mr. Stanley, when he started for Congo, adopted the 'lone star' of the Confederate Army in the American War as his symbol. It has now become the recognised flag of the Congo State.

Mbanza Ekongo, better known in Europe as San Salvador, the name given by the Portuguese, is situated on an elevated plateau 1,500 feet above the sea-level. It is one hundred miles from the nearest point of the Congo River, and two hundred miles from the coast. The Portuguese held military occupation for some years, but totally abandoned it in 1870. Their forts and barracks, and the old church, are now ruins, completely overgrown with shrubs and grass. There are very few trees near the town; they are mostly baobabs, and a sort of poplar. It is very bleak-looking, though one beautiful tree stands there, which at midday casts a shade of about eighty to one hundred feet in diameter.

In those days the town consisted of about two

hundred houses. As the party entered the town, the people crowded round them, and the excitement was great.

The first duty, of course, was to go and pay their respects to the King, to whom they presented a letter from Mr. Comber. He received them very graciously. Don Pedro was sitting in a chair which was covered with a blanket. He wore a mantle of scarlet-coloured cloth over a many-coloured jersey. On his head was an old solar topee; his hands held a crucifix and a sceptre. A boy stood behind him, supporting a huge umbrella covered with gores of various colours. The missionaries were given chairs to sit upon, and about fifty guns were fired in honour of the occasion.

The King expressed his satisfaction at seeing them, and hoped they had come to stay for a long time. After the interview, the missionaries withdrew to a house lent them by a friendly native, whose name was Matoka.

Three days were spent in unpacking the most necessary things, and trying to arrange them. On the fourth they both had an attack of fever. It was very awkward; for many things were still in the boxes, and they had no one to look after them properly.

When the fever had subsided Holman wrote:

'The King has shown us much kindness; in our first fever he paid us three visits and was evidently concerned about us.' Probably this sympathy was mingled with apprehension lest the death of two new white men, so soon after their arrival, should bring him into trouble. But we have Mr. Crudgington's testimony that 'Don Pedro was very fond of Holman; and great was the help Holman got in his long talks with his Majesty, the King speaking in the native language, which was translated to Holman in Portuguese by the King's chief man.'

Having a natural aptitude for languages, Holman made such rapid progress in Portuguese that, when they had been only six weeks in the country, the King sent for him to hold a service in his courtyard. 'He knew of our having services in our tent, and said it was not well that we should not teach him.' Holman of course spoke in Portuguese, which was translated to the King in Congo.

After the exposition of the parable of the Prodigal Son, the King turned to the people and harangued them. 'Then,' proceeds the narrative, 'he turned to us, and told us through his interpreter that what we said about the love of God was true; but he felt he could not do those things which are pleasing to God, and

wished us to come to him every day to talk to him about them, and teach him how a man can pray to God, and become fit for heaven. In many ways the King gave good evidence that his heart is kindly disposed towards us. But though he showed an inclination to believe the message of God's love, some of the people laughed at the absurdity of the idea that the Great Eternal God could or would be so kind, and do such wondrous things for His earthly children! We can scarcely be surprised that they thus laughed; if the Saviour's love is the wonder of angels, how incomprehensible it must be to one living in this dark land?'

From that Sunday there were regular services for some time, which the missionaries in turn conducted, whilst Holman usually spent his Sunday afternoons with the King, talking with him on questions of religion.

The two had recovered from the fever four days after their arrival, just in time to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Comber and Mr. Hartland. When Mr. Comber arrived, the first task was the presentation of the gifts which they had brought with them. With these the King seemed much gratified. After this ceremony had been gone through, the King was so charmed by the display of some mechanical toys, that he

readily acceded to their request for a site for building.

The missionaries, of course, proceeded to build their houses with the materials to hand. The first house they made, though bigger, was in the ordinary native style, of grass. As to the dwellings of the natives, the King's house and those of his chief men were of a larger and better character than the ordinary ones, but the following was the usual style of the Congo houses in that district twenty years ago.

The necessary space being cleared at the site desired, two rows of stakes, about ten feet apart, are driven into the ground at about ten inches distance from each other ; split palm fronds are then tied horizontally along the stakes on the outer side, and, thatched with grass, form the walls of the house. Ribs of palm fronds are tied on to the walls, and fixed to the ridge-pole at the top. Across these they tie more palm fronds, and the whole is thickly thatched with grass. The entrance, which is to the side of the front king-post, is hardly more than a hole, often barely two feet wide and four feet high, barred by a shutter of the very crudest kind, tied on with some pliant split twig. There are no windows in these houses, and as a rule the only furniture found inside them consists

of three big iron-ore stones which serve to support the round-bottomed cooking-pots, and between which they arrange their wood fires. There is no outlet for the smoke, so that very soon the roof inside a house becomes coated with sooty blackness, which however, soon dries on to the roof, and presents a shiny black appearance.

On the other side of the king-post there is generally a shelf on which the woman of the house keeps her cooking-pots arranged when not in use, with her baskets, &c.

If we go into the house of a careful, wise woman towards the end of the dry season, we shall very likely see a stack of wood in one corner—her provision for the wet season. Sometimes one comes across a low, native kind of bedstead, made of light, spongy kind of wood which they call 'mbasa,' about two feet wide, but never long enough for a grown-up person to lie at full length. As a rule they just lie down to sleep where they sit round their little fires, using either their arms or a small log of wood as a pillow. Going to bed is thus a very simple matter.

In the opposite wall to the entrance there is generally a doorway which leads into a small compartment, seldom more than from four to

six feet wide, where the mistress of the house hides her stores, her baskets of pea-nuts, her onions, or her last new cloth. Imagine, then, some dark-skinned crony sitting tailor-fashion by the side of her hearth-stones, the inevitable short pipe in her mouth, a few baskets beside her, or on the shelf, a brown, sun-dried gourd, which serves as a water-bottle, in the corner of the hut, and you will have a true picture of the interior of a Congo home on quiet, uneventful days.

CHAPTER IV

Early Days

'*Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, taketh not account of evil . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*'—1 Cor. xiii. 4–8 (R.V.).

THE first houses the missionaries put up were, like those of the natives, of grass. But, as time went on, and loads arrived, and more room was wanted to store them, instead of continuing to make grass houses, which are in constant need of repair and give easy access to thieves, the missionaries decided to build them of stones, of which there was abundance in the jungle. These stones were eventually found to have come from the ruins of the old Roman Catholic Church of the town. But what about the lime for mixing the mortar? There was none near. However, when the natives understood what they wanted, they pointed out some limestone rocks near the river Luezi, and an old disused kiln of Portuguese date, about two hours away. To get the lime to the kiln they

had to make a canoe; and several weary days had to be spent in felling trees and digging out that canoe. Of all that had to be done to make the house-building a success there is no need to speak here, as this is not primarily a record of the Mission but of a man.

In such a primitive country as the Congo early settlers needed to be Jacks-of-all-trades, if they were to have any degree of comfort; and missionaries, hoping to raise the people from the low moral standard to which they had sunk, needed to be even more so. Holman Bentley was equal to the occasion. He not only superintended the various operations, but with his own hands worked at the canoe-cutting, mounted the roof, and with his own hands helped in the thatching. In later years at Wathen with his own hands he worked at the press, and it was he who pierced and ringed the noses of the cattle.

Of Holman Bentley's resourcefulness at this period many stories have been told.

On a certain day, when the caravan in his charge was bringing up loads from the coast to San Salvador, they halted for a rest. The donkey with them evidently thought he had done enough for the day, and accordingly lay down on the ground. When the caravan was restarting, the animal refused to stir. No

beating or coaxing availed to raise him to his legs. Not that the beast was overtired; it was simply a case of African dislike to regular, steady work. Finally, seeing that nothing would persuade the animal, Holman set to work with his boys to collect a little heap of dry grass. They laid this down sufficiently near for the donkey to realise his danger, and set a match to it. Nothing more was needed; the creature jumped up and, owning himself conquered, quietly finished his day's work together with the human burden-bearers of the caravan.

Once we were crossing a swampy bit; the front part of the caravan had already waded through it with great difficulty. But how were we white folk and the donkey to get across? To be carried was impossible. There were some palm-trees near, and Holman soon had some of the lower fronds cut, and spread across the worst part. It was a very poor substitute for a bridge, but the only possible one at the time, and it sufficed for the occasion, and the donkey, with his proverbial surefootedness, passed over these with even less trouble than some of us did.

One day, when at San Salvador, Holman started the idea of making soap with native

materials. They ate native food as far as possible ; there was plenty of oil and ashes ; 'Why not make soap?' Why not, indeed? Mr. Crudgington says: 'Holman was very enthusiastic, and we had a great boiling and mixing of ingredients, but somehow that soap was not a success!' Mr. Crudgington does not say what became of the material; he draws a curtain over the scene. However, later on, when at Stanley Pool, we had another try, and we succeeded splendidly ; still later at Wathen, during one of our terms out, I never used any other soap than that I had myself made with palm oil under his directions.

During the absence, in the beginning of 1880, of Mr. Comber and Mr. Crudgington Holman undertook the medical work. Of the way in which he prepared himself for this addition to all his other occupations Mr. Crudgington writes: 'At one time when he and I were alone at San Salvador I was getting a good deal of medical work; and, as Bentley felt there might come a time when he would be alone, he used to come and help me with the washing and dressing and attending to wounds and ulcers, &c. In this way he quickly gained much useful knowledge, and was a very great help in the

medical work. I remember handing over to him a nasty case of a very large ulcer, and recall how pleased he was to see the healthy granulation forming. He was quite proud of that case, and the medical knowledge gained at that time helped him very considerably later on, when alone at Manyanga, and he had some nasty gunshot wounds to deal with.'

It soon became evident to Holman's colleagues that he was indeed a man of special qualities, raised up by God to do a special work; even Mr. Comber, the leader of the party, with his four or five years' previous experience in the Cameroons, acknowledged that he leant upon Bentley's advice more than upon anything else. 'If any one can see through a stone wall, it is Bentley,' he once said; and in a letter he wrote: 'We all look to Bentley as our God-given leader.' Yet Holman Bentley never seemed to think anything of himself; he never pushed himself to the fore; and he was not only always ready but content to take the lowest place, do the hardest work, and be the servant of all. No stranger visiting Wathen would ever have thought from his bearing towards the other men, even towards the youngest, that he was in reality, by right of precedence, the senior of the Mission.

But though his success both in gaining knowledge of the language, and in doctoring the sick, as well as in all manual work, was great, Holman Bentley never became elated. He knew whence his gifts came. He knew also that he was physically not a strong man, and lived in the consciousness that strength would be given him according as need arose. Thoughts like these kept him in daily humble dependence upon his God, and herein lay the true explanation of how he was able to do so much.

Even the natives used to call him 'Nlavangani,' which means the 'delicate one,' and the colleagues at one time seriously considered whether it would not be their duty to send him home. But they could ill afford to spare him, and he could not consent to be sent home a failure. He was often exhausted towards the end of a morning's work at some manual labour, and would be obliged to lie down on the grass to rest. After a short sleep, his indomitable spirit would rouse him up again to continue the task which had fallen to him to do.

Mr. Crudgington writes of that time: 'On looking back over those early days, I can see how Bentley was often saved a serious fever, consequent on fatigue, by his ability to drop

off to sleep in any, even the most difficult circumstances. When on the road he once fell asleep on a stream-worn granite boulder, sprawling face downwards, and slept thus for an hour, with his feet in the water! We used to joke with him at San Salvador about his alarm-clock, which he would set to go off at 5.30 a.m. The clock, faithful to its duty, would rouse up the baby in the partitioned-off compartment at the back of the house, which Matoka was good enough to let us share; but Holman could sleep on, gloriously indifferent to baby and clock alike, until called.'

From the same source we learn that 'travelling seemed to agree with him; he enjoyed it, and was always ready to go to Musuka or the coast to arrange about loads. For although the Dutch house was acting for us, it was necessary for one of us to go down from time to time to rearrange loads and get carriers. He always made his journeys a means of talking with the people about our work, and on each journey he was inquiring with a view to opening up a new and shorter route to Musuka. Besides, he felt it very helpful in the language: the contact with other pepole would always mean more words gained or some corrections made.'

Holman Bentley was, indeed, indefatigable in his efforts to acquire the language. Any task that would help him in that was gladly undertaken. He told me later on that, from the first, it was his earnest desire to acquire such a knowledge of it that God might be able to give him a share in translating His Word into the Congo tongue. This seems to have been mentioned in his home letters, for in 1882 we find him thanking his old pastor, Mr. Tymms, for some helpful books which had been sent out to him. 'Although there are many weary months of pioneer work before I can sit down to such work, I can study and prepare. But, my dear Mr. Tymms, I do so long for a time when, instead of building houses, trudging over rough hills, and all other preliminary pioneer work, I shall be able to do more of that which I came to do.'

He also expressed his grief at not being able to send such reports of Mission work as would please the friends at home, who, he had been told, were rejoicing at the literary work already accomplished by the Livingstone Inland Mission. But he was not a man to undertake such a task unless he felt he could do it well.

Before they had been in the country quite a year they were trying to teach the natives to sing hymns in their own tongue. Early in 1880 Holman writes to his brother: 'I send you a specimen of a hymn and an anthem. I find, though, that their scale is different from ours, but they like to hear us sing, and should be able to pick up tunes in that way.'

As to Holman's manner of acquiring the language, he always carried a little pocket-book with him, in which he wrote down immediately any word that was new to him, or anything that seemed idiomatic. Mr. Crudgington tells us that even on the road to the Pool, when fagged out with the day's march and its attendant anxieties, 'Holman would be often jotting down notes, so anxious was he to get any new words or phrases that I had in my pocket note-book.'

It was in October, 1879, that the four missionaries sat in solemn conclave for fixing the alphabet and pronunciation. 'I well remember,' says Mr. Crudgington, 'the meetings we had, sitting for a couple of hours whenever we could find time. Sometimes we had to stay on quite late at night, for we had other urgent work occupying us in the day-

time, transporting medicine, and the burning of lime and cutting of trees for building purposes. Both of these latter tasks were carried on at some distance from the town and involved a considerable amount of time and trouble.' The alphabet was duly agreed upon, and the only later change was the dropping of the letter X.

From Mr. Comber's letters we learn that in less than six months they had collected and arranged about one thousand words of a hitherto unwritten language. The achievement was no slight one. Considering that, besides this, they had in those few months settled down and built fairly comfortable, though temporary, premises, and half finished the work of building a large stone house ; had commenced a school, and got as far as the fourteenth page of the spelling-book ; and had Bible reading and prayers in Portuguese every evening with an average attendance of one hundred and fifty, to whom they had been able to explain God's truth ; had also made one journey of ninety miles in one direction and two marches of one hundred miles in another, the only wonder is that they found time for literary work at all. Imagine doing ten or twelve hours' hard manual labour, part

of it down in a valley about two hours' distance from the town, then climbing up home, and then having school in the evening, when it was 'hard work sometimes to keep awake to hear the boys slowly and monotonously spelling out their syllables'—and then, after that, entering upon a language conference!

But to continue my story. As San Salvador was in their minds a means to an end, rather than the ultimate goal, the missionaries from the first set themselves to try to discover how they might push on into the interior. The idea in the mind of the Home Committee, it will be remembered, was to send the gospel to the *interior* of Africa, using San Salvador as a base station. Their first duty was, therefore, to seek to reach Stanley Pool. The four carefully planned together and so divided the duties that some of them could be generally free to travel about in search of the road to the Pool. But the natives blocked the way too effectively.

The invincible opposition in 1873 to Lieut. Grandy's passage into the interior was due principally to the fear of the natives that the Portuguese might follow in his steps, and annex the country from whence they derived

their ivory; or, going up to the ivory sources and purchasing for themselves, deprive the natives of their profits as middlemen. For this same reason they objected to the missionaries learning the way inland. In vain did the party explain that they did not want to buy ivory; the natives felt that once the path was open, traders would not be kept out. It is a very real trouble, for by sale of their ivory, some palm oil and indiarubber, these people obtain all their salt, cloth, hoop-iron, powder, and other commodities. Several attempts were made by Comber and Hartland, but all were in vain.

On the return of Messrs. Comber and Crudgington from an unsuccessful attempt to find the desired road, Mr. Comber—the man of 'consuming energy' as his native name 'Vianga-Vianga' implies—started with Mr. Hartland to try the Mbanza Makuta road once more. They were driven back, and Mr. Comber sustained a gunshot wound.

When the King heard that Mr. Comber had been shot by a Makuta man, he suggested going with some soldiers to demand the offender, and, if his surrender were refused, to burn their town. The missionaries would not allow this, and much

surprised the old King by refusing to return evil for evil.

For a couple of months after the disastrous return from Mbanza Makuta no further attempts were made. Then an influential man from Zombo offered to escort two of them to Zombo. A journey with the King had given Mr. Bentley some knowledge of the people in the interlying district, and he was very anxious to go. Accordingly he and Mr. Crudgington started Zombo-wards, hoping thus to attain the desired end; but again they had to return baffled. The roads to the Pool *viâ* Makuta and Sanda were all closed to them. It was impossible to get up-country that way. As they returned, however, these two decided to consult with the others, and if possible seek to outwit the folks in that district by getting to the Pool by way of the North Bank.

Mr. Comber readily fell in with the idea, convinced that if any one could succeed it was Holman, whose resourcefulness and *savoir faire* seemed equal to anything. Already he had earned for himself the native name of 'Komba-Nzila' ('Road Sweeper') through having swept away the obstacles that prevented

the natives from going through the towns which lay directly between San Salvador and the river, instead of following the circuitous route by which they had travelled on their first journey to San Salvador. 'It was a good stroke of business,' Mr. Crudgington writes, 'and Holman had had to overcome many difficulties—old quarrels, old palavers, and the objection of carriers to go on a strange road. But Holman had great patience in such matters. He was always so pleasant with the natives, so ready to 'become all things to all men,' squatting down with them at their little wood fires, always seeing the humorous side of things, and raising many an innocent, hearty laugh; ready at any time to play with the children who, when they had overcome their shyness, would cling to him and chatter to him.'

From the first Holman Bentley attracted children, and saw the importance of winning their confidence. In a letter home about this time he says:—

'They (the children) follow us about. If we have to go out of the town, we have a string of boys. They will come down to the river for the whole day, and help in any way they can—*anything*

to be near us. It is not all curiosity that leads them to do this, for, after all due allowances have been made for that, it does not take much ingenuity to see that many of the children have become really attached to us.'

He was very pleased about this, for not only did he love the children, but he found that through listening to their chatter, and talking with them, he gained more fluency in the language than in any other way. For although he might get many words and short sentences from the men as he joined them at their various tasks, it was from the children that he learnt most of the real idiom of the language.

But he had a still more important reason for gaining over the children. He says in one of his letters: 'Those who look for great and sudden changes among this people forget how slowly the world moves at home. Very few of those who are adults now will ever be other than they are. The children are the hope of Africa.' And of the children he wrote: 'Their ears and hearts are more easily reached than those who have become brutalised by the cruel, wicked life of the so-called 'happy, innocent savages.' And

again: 'It is to the children we must look for assistance. They will be our future teachers, evangelists, and, at last, pastors.' This was written in 1883.

Mr. Bentley's first little house-boys were Kavungu and Malevo, nephew and son of King Pedro V. It cost Holman a good deal of trouble to get Kavungu's superstitious old mother to agree to the boys going to live with the white men, but he succeeded at last, and once having got them never faltered in the task he had undertaken. Whether they were a help or a hindrance, he put up with any amount of inconvenience rather than let them go. Realising that these two would be amongst the 'great men of the Congo in a short time' his own patience with them had been endless. Indeed, his passion for winning boys led him to make almost any possible sacrifice. He never considered any trouble too much, any inconvenience too great, if only he could win their affection. Substituting the word 'boys' for 'Congo' we would echo the words of one of his colleagues: 'The boys loved Dr. Bentley because Dr. Bentley loved the boys.' His tact in dealing with them appears in another place, where he writes: 'The boys all know there is nothing

demeaning in work, for they have so often seen us all turn up our sleeves and do it, but there should be some recollection of their rank. It would be a pity to set a boy to cook or dust who was capable of better work, and who would be better fitted for his future state by other tasks. While I should never talk to the boys about rank, I bear it in mind myself, and thus seek to fit the future Chiefs for their responsibilities.'

Many years later at Wathen, when we had the heirs of powerful Chiefs together with their slaves on our station, it was this 'remembering it oneself' that enabled him to steer clear of many an awkward position. And yet so fair and just was the treatment of all the boys together that never did we hear any complaint about 'favourites,' &c. True, we had some favourites, but they became thus by seeking our companionship, always hanging about the house, and being handy to do any little unexpected service. And the lazy, indifferent boys realised quite well that the favour shown to others might have been theirs if they had been willing to take a little trouble; but they seemingly smothered any feelings of jealousy with the characteristic shrug of the shoulders, and perhaps consoled

themselves with the thought that, after all, *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle.*

Holman's idea of having many children to live on the station did not find favour with all the colleagues; indeed, at one time he did not advocate it himself, feeling that he had not sufficient time to teach and train them thoroughly, without neglecting the work of carrying the gospel to the towns; but later on, when I relieved him of the school work, he never felt at liberty to refuse any wishing to come to the station to be taught, realising that it was only by example and close daily contact that their characters could be moulded, and the children trained to habits of self-control, obedience and industry. Of course it meant a good deal of trouble and weariness to himself, but results have fully proved the wisdom of the plan, for many were willing to stay with him for the sake of learning to read and write, who would otherwise never have submitted to the discipline of station life.

As no account of Dr. Bentley's life would be complete without some special mention of Nlemvo, I will here insert his story, as far as possible in Dr. Bentley's own words.

'You have heard something about my boy

Nlemvo. Ever since our reaching Congo I have tried to get a boy to stay with me for a while. After some twelve months it happened that the King of Congo had occasion to go to stop a war in the district called Madimba, some twenty miles from this town. He wished me to accompany him.'

It was just a thing that suited Holman, throwing him more than ordinarily into the companionship of the King, for whom he felt a deep, yearning pity, as well as enabling him to see more of real native life, and gaining more knowledge of the surrounding country and the language. On their way to the town named Nkonko, they passed through Lemvo. The friendly white man and his strangely pleasant ways were discussed, with the result that Don Pedro Bidi, the 'Chief, brought his little nephew, Ndundulu, to me, to be my boy. Like the other little boys, he was dirty and ragged and not at all prepossessing at first sight. As Ndundulu was not a nice name, I called him Lemvo, after his town, to which, when the language became better known, the "N" was prefixed, which, being interpreted, means "of," and is, perhaps, equivalent to the French *de* and German *von*.

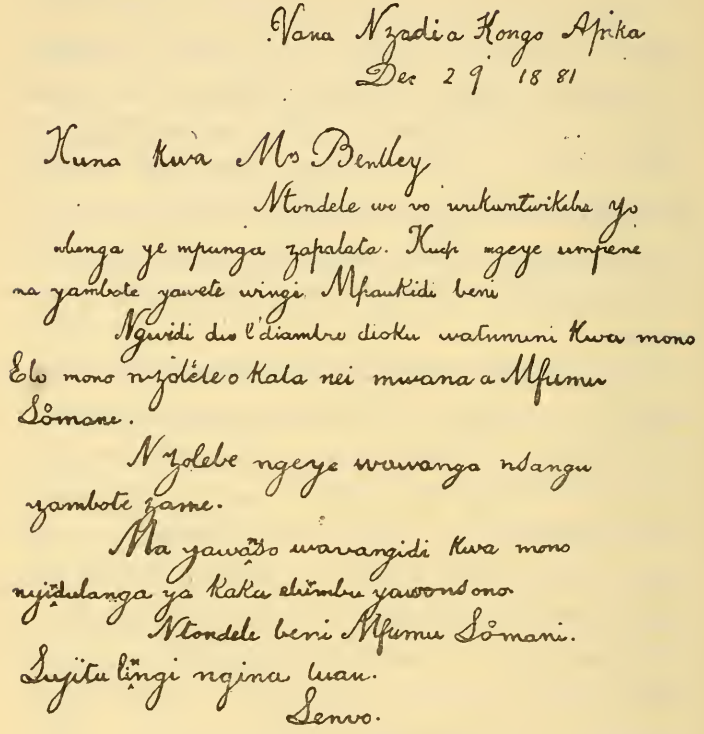
'At first he was quiet and timid, but he soon forgot his fears, and in two or three days was

quite at home with me. He stayed with me some three or four months, until we decided on making our great effort to reach Stanley Pool, when we sent all our boys away for a time, and Nlemvo returned to his uncle, who tried to place him in a Portuguese training house, and also offered him to the priests, who had arrived in Congo during our absence. On my return I sent for the boy, and he came back to me on April 30, 1881, for a definite term of two years.'

As to what became of the boy not much requires to be said. With the greatest patience Dr. Bentley guided his early studies, and writing of him in December, 1881, he says: 'Lemvo is sitting beside me, writing his thanks. . . . Of course he has his duties to perform, but in this patriarchal style of life he can do these, and yet be more like a son. I pray for him great things, and trust that God's grace may early draw him to give his heart to the Saviour.'

The following is the letter to Holman's mother from Nlemvo, which I am glad to be able to show for two reasons; firstly, because it reflects great credit on Nlemvo, considering that he had only been with Dr. Bentley for a few months when this letter was written, but more especially because it shows that even at that early date the

language had been reduced to a regular system of words :—



Vana Nzadi a Kongo Afrika
Dec 29 1881

Kuna kwa Mrs Bentley

Ntondele wo vo wukuntwikeba yo mbenga ye mpunga zapalata. Kuch ngeye umpene na yambote yawete wingi. Mfaukidi beni

Ngwidi dio l'diambre dioku watununi kwa mono Elo mono nzolele o kala nei mwana a Mfumu Sômane.

Nzolebe ngeye wawanga nsangu yambote zame.

Ma yawanso wawangidi kwa mono nyindulanga ya kaka ebumbu yawonsono

Ntondele beni Mfumu Sômani.

Sujitu lingi ngina luau.

Lenvo.

Translation of Nlemvo's letter :—

To Mrs. Bentley,

I thank you for sending me a ring and bracelet in silver. For you have given me nice and good things. I am grateful.

I had the message you sent me. Yes, I want to be as a child to Mr. Olomani (Holman).

I want you to have good reports of me.

I remember every day all the good done to me.

I am grateful to Mr. Olomani. With much respect,

Lenvo.

What Holman Bentley says about his ideas of training Nlemvo may be taken as the clue to his phenomenal success with all his boys. He was most careful not to unfit them for native home life, nor to make them dissatisfied with such native customs as were not wrong in themselves. He never countenanced imitation of white man's peculiarities in dress. He felt that the customs of the Bible lands in regard to apparel are far more suitable to a hot country like Congo than West European clothing. For the natives, bare feet and loin cloths, or sandals and loose, flowing robes are far and away to be preferred to boots, with stockinged feet inside, and trousers. Change of heart was his great point, not change of customs. It has been said that 'no wise missionary would wish to supplant native customs wholesale.' This was his point exactly; and night after night, however hard the day's work may have been, he was found talking to these boys about the love of Jesus, and trying to persuade them to live upright and pure lives, for the love of Him who died for them.

It was a real joy to him later on at Manyanga that some twenty or thirty little fellows would daily find some excuse to come down to chat and play with him. Some would bring bundles of thatching grass for the house, others would

get their mothers to cook food which they could take to sell to him.

In one letter he writes: 'Yesterday, Sunday, some fine Ntombo boys came down to sell bark. I told them to come and sit down and I would play my harmonium to them, and we would sing something different from their dance songs. We sang a Congo hymn, and they liked it and wanted another, and then I talked a little bit and they promised to bring more boys another day, and we would have a lot of singing. Then they wanted to know if they might cook my food and wash my plates. This is just what I had so long been trying for. If these Ntombo boys come as they promised, Ndanganga boys will want to know why only Ntombo boys are allowed to live in our house. Then, as a great favour, Ndanganga boys will be admitted. Jealousy will work where other methods fail. If once we can make a start, there are a number of children, enough to make a fine school here, and soon the men and women who come down to sell food will listen to what we have to tell them.'

The sojourn on the station, with its airy buildings and its rules for cleanliness, is a revelation of possibilities of comfort undreamed of. A few months of intercourse with the missionaries do more than years with the trader; for in the

missionaries' house he is no longer a subordinate, or, worse, a 'dirty nigger,' but a friend and guest, who is cared for and appreciated. The trader does not enter their homes; he does not speak their language; he does not care for them. They are to him simply the means to an end. But the missionary, living among them and for them, becomes their most trusted friend, and gains a great influence over them.

One of his earliest boys at Manyanga was Nganga, the slave of Makito, an important Chief of Ngombe. Nganga was free born, but his father sold him to pay a fine or debt. 'Nganga,' he wrote, 'is most careful and attentive to the little house-work he has to do. He is the first about in the morning; the first in his place to wait at table. If he is told to help for an hour in the garden he does it cheerfully. He has been here eleven weeks, and not once have I been vexed with him about anything. He is between seven and ten years old, and is really a dear little fellow.'

But Nganga was not an exceptional boy; there were many equally lovable, and nothing was more common a sight than to see now one, then another, sometimes more than one at a time, leaning against the back of Holman's chair at meal-times, or resting his little woolly head on

the beloved shoulder. His boys were so attached to him that, excepting when they were all at school, or at their weekly bathing, he was never without some of them near him. Many a time would he be found with a little one on his knees, as happy and as confident as if they were father and child. And in the evenings they would flock into our rooms, big and little, and after our evening meal was ended he would take one into his own room to have a little helpful talk; then, after a little while, another, and then another; and so kind and loving were these talks that by and by the boys would come night after night to the house, hoping to be distinguished in this way. Much fruit has been gathered as a result.

On mail nights, when correspondence *had* to have the precedence over everything else, how often I have gone into his room at 9.15 or thereabouts and found him surrounded by some five or six boys, who were there for no other purpose than just to be near him. Occasionally he was imposed upon; but by far the greater number of those thus dealt with were won for Christ. A friend noticed this habit and wrote: 'I remember him about nine years ago on the steamer. The two boys he had with him were led aside most days for a little talk about Jesus. It was a lesson to me, and it has often helped me.'

Chapter V

To Stanley Pool

'His call we obey, like Abram of old,
Not knowing our way; but faith makes us bold,
For though we are strangers, we have a good guide,
And trust in all dangers the Lord will provide.'

J. NEWTON.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many attempts made to reach Stanley Pool by the brethren, it was not until 1881 that at last it was reached by Messrs. Bentley and Crudgington *viâ* the right bank of the river.

Having heard through Mr. Grenfell that de Brazza, a French explorer, had penetrated inland, from Gaboon as far as Stanley Pool, and returned to the Lower River by the right bank, the four colleagues now definitely settled that this route should be tried without delay. At eight o'clock in the morning of January 8, 1881, Mr. Crudgington and Holman started on their bold attempt to reach the Pool.

The journey was attended with no little degree of danger and discomfort, as the two lonely white

men with their twenty carriers pressed on day after day, further and further away from friends, through towns that scowled at their appearing, not knowing what reception they might meet with at the next one, and whether there would not be difficulties hatched up to make their return passage through those towns impossible.

That he knew the possibilities of danger, and had counted the cost, is evident from a letter in which Holman writes of the time 'when freed from this mortal body, I watch my old sinful encumbrance being "chopped"' (*i.e.*, eaten).

Mr. Crudgington, in writing of this journey, says: 'I think perhaps nothing of all our work brought Holman and myself into such close brotherly friendship as our journey to the Pool. The dangers we shared brought us closer to each other. We could only consult each other, and when danger seemed the greatest, we would get away quietly together, and determine that, whatever we felt, our men should at least not see what was in our hearts.'

Of the trouble they had with their men, who were full of fear and often tried to run away, and yet were too afraid of finding themselves without the protection of the white men in a strange country, there is some notice in his own letters; but it is Mr. Crudgington who writes that 'Hol-

man did a tremendous amount on that journey by his optimistic view of things, and quiet persistence with our few men. Failure often threatened us. Sometimes the guides would refuse to go on and demand their pay, before they had finished their part of the contract. If there had been any weakness or hesitation they would never have gained their end.

The two travellers were of course provided with compass and aneroid, which things greatly puzzled the carriers. Sometimes they would promise a man a present of cloth if he would lead them to the next town; but more than once the guides took them off on the wrong road, for fear of getting into trouble for taking the white men where they were not wanted. As soon as either of the two suspected that they were going in the wrong direction, the compass would be consulted. Once the guide left them in the lurch, and they had to find their way by the compass alone. No wonder that 'the carriers, by and by, began to regard the compass and the aneroid as two very remarkable fetishes, who were "our secret informers," knowing as they did that the road was as new and strange to us as it was to them. Holman tried to explain these instruments to them; how much they took in it is hard to say, but at any rate their wonder grew into confidence.'

On one occasion, as they were on the march and had to pass through a market, the trade for the day was completely stopped through every one rushing to see the strange phenomenon of two men with white, shining faces, and light, straight hair. There were some thousands of people there, as it was one of the great markets of the whole district.

Mr. Crudgington had no lack of incident to place on record. On another occasion, 'close to the town where they tried to steal Holman's bedding—and, in fact, several things without which we should have experienced considerable difficulty —we had gone on about a mile feeling very tired, and Holman said, "Let us lie down for half an hour and rest." We did so, and in a few minutes we must have had a hundred or two of white butterflies about us; I never saw such a swarm together. They settled on our heads and on our hands, and did not seem the least bit afraid. They seemed to speak to us of the Divine Presence which we knew was about us. It was such a contrast to the anxiety we had just gone through. "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust." I often felt how much the spiritual side of Bentley's nature came out on that journey. He was not demonstrative, but the childlike trust was beautiful to see.

'How well I remember too, our experience at the Likasa River, and Holman's anxiety concerning myself. There was no bridge, and the current was so strong it was impossible to keep on one's feet. We decided to swim across. Holman went first and gained the other side; I quickly followed, but was somewhat carried down by the current. Holman immediately prepared to come to my help, but found that I had got out of the current, and was swimming up-stream, close to the bank where he was. How much our dangers and our difficulties bound us to each other, and brought out the kindliness of his great heart!'

One thing that caused them considerable inconvenience was that at each town, after the first few had been passed, drums would be beaten to warn the people of the next that something was coming. Telegraphy or any electrical means of communication was of course not known in the country in those days, but the villages had some sure means of communication by their drums. What was at hand could not be described, but they had a certain signal of alarm.

On more than one occasion when the missionaries arrived at a town they almost ran into the arms of a man who was on the look-out for the dreaded intrusion, gun in hand. As they were nearing one place called Yanga they suddenly

found themselves confronted by four men armed with guns. Their perfect sang-froid saved them from being killed on the spot. However, one man followed them closely for no little distance. On arriving in the town they complained to the Chief of the reception they had had. Various excuses were offered, one even being that they had been mistaken for some Highlanders with whom they of the Lowlands were at feud. White men mistaken for black!

On another occasion 'we were,' says Mr. Crudgington, 'in great straits for drinking-water. Food had been short, but no drinking-water on a long march at the close of the day was a still more serious matter. It was most unusual too. Our men were tired, hungry, and dispirited. If we could only have found water we could have camped. It was the only time on the journey, I think, that I was a bit anxious about Bentley, and fever. He had for some time felt in need of some hot tea, but water we could not find. Our Kroo boys, too, wanted some food, and we had very little to give them excepting rice. But dry rice was no good. At last, from sheer exhaustion, our men said we must stop. We tried persuasion, but all in vain.

'Bentley said, "Well, let us camp here; you, Harry, see about getting things ready for the

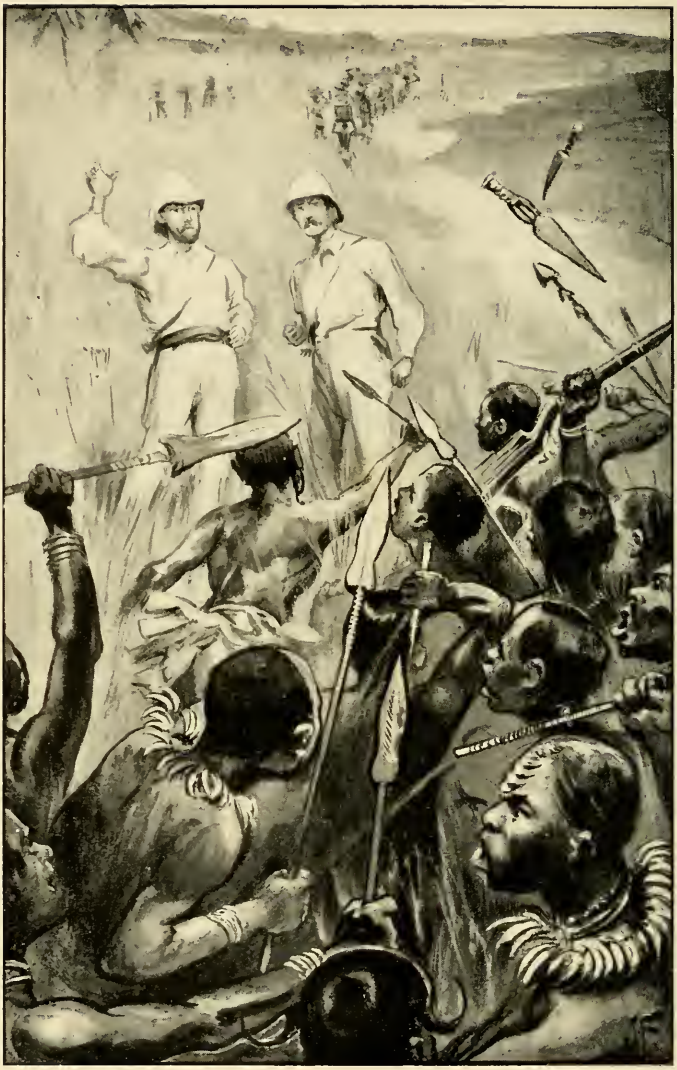
night, but delay them all you can, while I go a little ahead."

'He did so, and I began to think I could not stop things much longer. Darkness would soon be upon us, so I had the "fly," which we used as a tent, put up. The men had cut some firewood to keep off wild animals at night, when back came Holman panting—he had been running—to tell us there was water not far ahead. He did not say how far; it was best not to do so before the men, but they caught up their loads, added to these even the weight of the firewood which they had cut, and we trotted on. It meant another mile walk, but the thought of water made up for the weariness of stumbling along. The men went on quite cheerily, and what would have been an uncomfortable night, with much grumbling from our men, was turned into one of great rejoicing. They finished off with a good dance round their fires that night.'

It is needless to recount all the particulars of that remarkable journey, so interesting to read about, so difficult to perform, or of the way in which God manifestly helped and protected His messengers. In almost every case their visit to a town was followed by a much-desired tornado of rain, so that on their return journey they were regarded as rain-bringing gods.

On this road they found some native bridges across the streams. These bridges are made entirely of the llianas which festoon the trees, which are tied and interlaced together and made into a sort of rope. After carrying all the long strands across the river, and fastening them in a proper position to the tree which is chosen, small sticks of about 2 feet 6 inches or 3 feet wide are tied on to the lower strands. When the bridge is new, it is as good a way as any of crossing a river, if you get used to the swaying which every footstep causes. It is perfectly safe; but the cross sticks, which have a tendency to drop out, are not always replaced, and then great care has to be taken as to where one places one's feet. The bridges are generally fastened fairly high up in the tree in order to allow of the sagging down of the bridge, even when the water is at its highest point. One bridge was so high up that they had, as Holman wrote, to 'monkey' down a palm-tree to descend from it. But before pushing on their journey he had cut down a small tree, and assisted the natives to make a good slanting descent.

At last, on the morning of January 29th, they reached the Pool. They had been looking out for the River for some time, feeling certain that it could not be far off. Mr. Crudgington was the first to spy the Pool. There providentially they



THE RECEPTION AT STANLEY POOL.

'Only a Divine Providence kept them from at once leaping upon us.'

Drawn by J. Finnemore.] [*To face page* 81.

found a spokesman ready for them, in the person of a Zombo trader, to whom they had shown kindness in San Salvador. It was well; for the two missionaries were met on the beach at Ntamo by a crowd of natives armed with knives and spears. But the reception at Nshasha was even more menacing. Some 150 to 200 hideously painted savages rushed out armed with knives and spears and clubs and guns, throwing their knives into the air, brandishing their spears, dancing, yelling, shouting in a truly threatening manner.

'No description could give any fair idea of the position we were in. We ordered the carriers to walk back quickly on the Ntamo road, but on no account to run, and above all to keep together. As the natives advanced we retreated, parleying all the time in order that our men might have a chance of escape. When they were a good distance away and the savages seemed to get wilder, we quickened our pace. Sometimes they were within twenty yards of us, and only a Divine Providence kept them from at once leaping upon us and doing their horrible work. Perfect fiends they seemed, and taking advantage of the long grass, they pressed closer and closer round us. We felt if we ran they would get more excited and mad, and most likely some would fire. The only thing was to keep cool, and remember in

Whose keeping we were, and that not a finger could be lifted to pull a trigger without the will of our Heavenly Father. The work was the Lord's. We were in His hands. For ourselves indeed we had no fear, but we were anxious for our boys, who were dependent on us for their safe return. Thank God, we had their confidence, and they obeyed strictly.'

At last, as all hope of escape seemed gone, the French sergeant, left by M. de Brazza in charge of the French flag, blew his bugle, and the people vanished. A little later on there was a second threatening of trouble; the savages appeared bent on slaughter; but again the bugle sounded, and once more the danger was averted.

Holman Bentley so loved the natives that I believe it was a relief to him to be able to find an excuse for these hostilities in the fact that M. de Brazza had been there, and, having made friends with the people, had presented them with the French flag, and enjoined them not to let any other white man come to take it away. They did not know, of course, the political meaning of the flag, but they had been made to understand that it was something that would bring them great advantage in the shape of much trade.

Mr. Crudgington writes: 'Bentley, in his book,[1]

[1] *Pioneering on the Congo* (R.T.S.; 2 vols., 16s. net).

speaks about our difficulty with Nga Liema at the Pool; but he does not mention one little incident which was characteristic of himself in preparing for emergencies. We were practically in Nga Liema's power. He had put us in a house in his enclosure to sleep. Up to a late hour men were marching around the house with knives and spears. We meant to have taken the bearings of the place, but had to desist because the people objected to our walking far from the house in the evening. So, finding it no use, we retired to rest, or rather affected to do so. But near midnight Bentley stole out quietly. The moon was well up then, and he found out just where we were, and the roads leading out of the town. It was a risky thing to do, but as Bentley said, "We must be prepared to get away any moment with our men, if necessary."'

Nga Liema, the great Chief at the Pool, was, it seems, very disgusted that they did not give him as big a present as Mr. Stanley had done. They made him understand that they did not come to buy ivory, or to trade, but to teach his people about God, to give medicine to the sick, and instruct the children, and to be his friends. He should have a present, but he was not to expect such large gifts from them as from those who come to a country for their own profit.

In one of his letters Holman says : 'That first journey to the Pool was a mere nothing, so far as scientific travelling goes ; but it becomes increasingly a mystery to us and all how we were successful and returned in safety. God only knows how much devilry and wicked savagery was held in check that His purposes might be accomplished for this poor people.'

Recalling other incidents in this journey, Mr. Crudgington says : 'The part of the journey to Stanley Pool that was most worrying was where we entered the district of the ivory traders. Constantly we were stopped, sometimes with almost physical force. At such places Bentley would good-humouredly joke, or admire some particular ornament or weapon of warfare, and keep the people's attention engaged, while I slipped on ahead with the carriers. It often required great tact and perfect coolness under very trying circumstances, but these qualities Bentley possessed to a remarkable degree. After getting on a bit I would collect the carriers together, tell them to take a rest, and wander back along the road, wondering what was happening behind, when I would generally find Bentley coming along smiling. He was pretty certain to have smoothed things out, and to have found out something we wanted to know about

our road ahead besides. Not that the natives were willing to inform us, but he had a knack of disarming their suspicions, and getting the information he wanted.'

To return to Mr. Crudgington's account: 'We had many experiences on the return journey, and Bentley's courage and resourcefulness stand out very clearly in my memory. In spite of danger, he was full of brightness. On one occasion he wanted to "kill the scent," for the people had been very hostile, so, coming to a fairly shallow stream which we had to cross, Holman suggested that we should wade up the stream for a good distance before landing on the other side. We did so, and this quite cut off our followers.

'Another time he did so want to shoot a hippopotamus, and at one encampment we had a very exciting night. Our men often copied the Zanzibaris' plan of shelter for the night, that is, they cut some branches, sticks, and grass, and quickly ran up a rough sort of conical shelter. Our camp was close to the river, and we had seen a great number of hippopotami in the evening, and Holman had had a shot at a few, but with no result. This was very disappointing to the men, to whom a good feed of hippo flesh would have been a great treat. When arranging for the night Holman said, "I hope one of those beasts

won't come and scratch itself against the pole of our 'fly.'" We wondered whether we had better sleep in one of those grass shelters, but finally decided on the "fly" as being more protection, and, of course, the hippopotamus did come to inspect matters. By and by we woke up with a start, and heard a grunting, and felt the shaking of our "fly." We scrambled out, and so startled the hippopotamus that he went off in a hurry, and nearly took our "fly" with him, through getting a foot entangled in the rope. Holman fired at him a parting shot, by way of "giving vent to his feelings," as he said, but it seemed in no way to disturb the progress of the hippopotamus.'

Their appetites kept wonderfully good; 'We could eat almost anything we could get,' says Mr. Crudgington, 'and I can picture Holman to myself even now, sitting on the ground munching "kwanga" (cassava dumpling), humming a tune, and wondering if we might, "as a treat," have a little condensed milk on it.'

Later on they passed near enough to the station of the L.I.M.[1] to spend a pleasant two days with the friends there. They were able also to buy a couple of canoes cheaply, as the river was again navigable for some distance. On the

[1] Livingstone Inland Mission (see page 22). It was afterwards transferred to the American Baptist Missionary Union.

second day after leaving the friends of the L.I.M. they arrived at Mr. Stanley's camp.

'When we met Stanley [1] on our return journey he was, as Bentley said, "kindness itself." What a lot of questions he asked! How much he wanted to know! We sat up till past midnight talking. Holman was very tired; and, while Stanley and I were talking, Holman sometimes went off nodding. Then he would wake up with a start, full of apologies. "Oh, dear! Please, Mr. Stanley, do excuse me!" But Mr. Stanley rather liked it, and said, "I know what it is to be fagged out." Holman often referred to that night. When, after an absence of forty-three days, of which the up-journey had occupied twenty-one, they returned to Vivi, and told some of Stanley's men (Belgian officers) that they had been to the Pool, these would not believe their story. "The idea!" Holman exclaimed, "as though you could take in Stanley!"'

I do not know how many words were collected on this journey, but Holman lost no opportunity of collecting and writing them down at once; they were too precious for him to trust to memory.

[1] Mr. (afterwards Sir) H. M. Stanley was, from 1879 to 1884, largely engaged in opening up the Congo in connection with the African International Association, which afterwards obtained international recognition as the Congo Free State.

Chapter VI

Manyanga

'A life that moves to gracious ends
Through troops of unrecording friends
. . . a deedful life.'

TENNYSON.

KNOWING that, shortly after their departure from San Salvador for the Pool, Portuguese priests had arrived with letters and rich presents; and having heard from various sources that the Portuguese padres had demanded the expulsion of the English missionaries, Holman wondered what their reception would be, after four months' absence. But nothing could have been heartier. Holman writes of it:—

'On our arrival we met with a most enthusiastic reception from the people. It was pouring with rain, or they would have come out to meet us on the road; but one man saw us as we neared the town, and raised the cry. The crowd soon gathered, and the people rushed and struggled to get

near us to shake hands, screaming and shouting with excitement, their eyes beaming with welcome. We knew that the people had a kindly feeling towards us, but we scarcely realised its depth and heartiness. Nor did I know myself, till then, how much I loved them.

'We had returned to San Salvador with some misgivings. But the heartiness of our reception made us feel ashamed of our doubts. The reality and depth of their feeling towards us was beyond all question. Scarcely had we entered the house when a messenger from the King expressed his pleasure at our return and made inquiries as to our health. We sent back our thanks, and a message that we would see him when we had had a wash and a cup of tea, and had got into some dry clothes.'

On their return to San Salvador the wise old man carefully watched the mutual bearings of each Mission towards the other. He found that, although the Protestant missionaries knew of the priests' enmity, they yet showed to them the same hearty kindness as to other people.

His indignation against the priests was therefore great; and when one of them wrote

him a letter warning him further against the Protestant missionaries, the King retorted firmly. He told the padres that he had heard 'about their difficulties in buying food, and how the Protestant missionaries had once given them one of their best sheep when they were without food, and entertained them at dinner. He thought it disgraceful that they should behave like this behind our backs. Truly,' Holman added, 'it is remarkable to have the tables thus turned, and the professing followers of Jesus taught by a heathen!'

Finding that San Salvador lay quite out of their direct route to the Pool, there was some hesitation as to whether the missionaries should continue their work there. But the King and many others entreated them not to leave. Finally, the King said, 'If you must take your Mission to Stanley Pool, at least let one of you stay here. Do not leave us to ignorance and the priests. They teach us nothing. You have taught us a little, and just as we are beginning to understand, are you going away to leave us?'

They promised to consider the matter carefully, and finally arrived at the conclusion that, although they ought to put their main force into starting the Mission on the Upper River, they

would not abandon the old friends at San Salvador. These were delighted when they heard the decision, which was sanctioned by the Committee at home.

Not long after this Messrs. Comber, Bentley, and Crudgington took leave of their San Salvador friends, leaving Mr. Hartland to hold the post there. Mr. Crudgington proceeded to England to confer with the Committee on various matters, and Messrs. Comber and Bentley prepared for a system of transport to the Pool.

One great impediment to their progress was the numerical weakness of the party; and in several of his letters home about this time, Holman Bentley wonders when helpers will be coming.

'Where,' he asked in one, 'are the young men of the Baptist Churches at home? What has come over them all? There was such a burst of enthusiasm when the Congo Mission was started, and that not confined to the elders in the Churches. We have had to face great difficulties, but we have been able, in a great measure, to overcome them. The climate has a bad name, but I do not think there is need of such great fear of the climate. We have adopted a mode of living that seems to suit

us very well, and all of us have first-rate health. I have not had fever for nine months. We take care to have plenty of good food; we do not scorn mosquito nets, and believe in a comfortable bed, as in all that tends to a good night's rest. These simple means do much to keep us hearty and well. With the exception of poor Mrs. Comber, we have not only all survived, but enjoy remarkably good health. Indeed I enjoy better health than when at home in London.'

In another letter he said:—

'Our history thus far has not been by any means one of disaster, failure, and death; and yet when we write home calling for more help, instead of the ready reply which we had every reason to expect, no one is ready to come to our aid! If any one had suggested to me the possibility of such a thing two and a half years ago, I should have most indignantly refuted such a scandalous libel on the sterling quality of the devotion and earnestness of the young men of the Churches. It will be a lasting disgrace if the Belgian Expedition, hunting for ivory and rubber, gets ahead of the Baptist Missionary Society, seeking to win jewels for the Saviour's crown.'

Acting on Mr. Stanley's advice, the missionaries

decided to utilise that part of the river which was navigable, and a friend in Plymouth gave them a steel boat for the purpose. Hence the first thing that lay to hand was to procure two sites, one at the point where the water transit would commence, and a second where the goods would be landed for further transport overland. The final agreement to the purchase of land from the natives of Manyanga is too amusing to be left out. Holman gives the following account of it :—

'On the 12th the Chiefs assembled. They sat in the shade of one of our houses, and first had a noisy quarrel among themselves. Presently they were ready to talk to me. They had brought me two pigs, and two calabashes of palm wine. The first present I received in return for the heavy present with which I had opened negotiations. Now, besides the ten coats promised they asked for ten pieces of cloth as well, in return for the present of the land. It would be unpolitic to do anything that would suggest that the affair had not been settled long ago. Their request for cloth therefore was refused ; also because I knew if I had put one hundred pieces "on top" they would have asked me for two hundred. A long discussion ensued ; at last the two Chiefs put their marks

to a book, handing over the land to us. They took their coats and forty yards of white cloth. The two pigs, which were presented, had been tied up. By and by, when the people had ascended the hill, some one said, "Where are the pigs?" The illustrious visitors had stolen their own present! We shouted to them to bring back our pigs, they shouted back something about wanting more coats and cloth, and continued their way. It was already twilight, but I sent a boy after the pigs. He overtook a small boy making his way slowly back with a pig in tow, and two coats on his arm. Our boy took possession of these, and the next day they sent the second pig to redeem the coats."

The people watched with much interest the building of the house, and when it was finished wished to see the rooms. They wondered much at the mysterious books. 'In three months' time,' wrote Mr. Comber, 'Bentley had made a good and substantial station.'

By the time the missionaries got to Manyanga the Belgian Expedition, known under the initials of 'A.I.A.,' [1] had already established itself there. But the people soon learnt to distinguish between white men, and the Mission stood out in relief against them. Holman writes: 'The

[1] African International Association. See Note, p. 87.

other day when the natives intended to kill some Zanzibaris on the market, they sent us down private warning lest our boys should go and meet trouble. The people like us; our gentle manner shows out in great contrast to the strong Expedition.' One of the Belgian officers in those days naïvely told Bentley that 'Stanley had heard that they were getting on well with their transport of the five hundred loads, and that he [Stanley] had written him that he must be sharp over his transport of the boilers; it would be strange if missionaries fresh from religious colleges could do more than Belgian officers from their military schools!'

As to Bentley's relations with the Belgian officials, one of his colleagues says: 'In his intercourse with other white men he was always frank and courteous, without ever pushing himself to the fore.' And so it remained all along, even to the end of his life. Yet he knew also how to hold his own when necessary, as the following extract from one of his letters will show:—

'The other day V. told me that he had purchased the garden ground which forms our river frontage, but as they had sufficient garden ground of their own river front they would be most happy to place it at

our disposal as long as we are here, on the understanding that we hand it back to them any time we go away. I thanked him for the offer, but declined to take my own as a gift. He professed not to know anything about my arrangement with the Chiefs. I told him that the contract was signed, and that my right to the river frontage was evidently recognised by the natives in that they felt it necessary to abstract from me a promise that natives might fish from Ingelezo's beach. His talking was rather high-handed. I told him that the A.I.A. should be very careful what precedents they set. If they chose to ignore "paper," what would they do to insure to themselves the large territories they were then monopolising? Any new-comer could settle on their land if "paper" is to be ignored, and any foolish native yarn is to be listened to.'

A propos of the advent of the Expedition he writes in one of his letters: 'It may seem to some a pity that the Expedition has come at this time to touch the people's nearest interests. But it had better come before us than after us; in the latter case the missionary would always be regarded as the introducer of the spoiling trader, a curse rather than a blessing. Indeed it is the feeling of us all that this Expedition has been the instrument in God's hands of opening up the

country, and, humanly speaking, the only hope of our penetrating into the interior.'

Holman more than once acknowledged the help that the Belgian Expedition had been to them. While they were far from approving of all the actions and policy of the Belgian officers, they fully realised that but for this strong Expedition, their difficulties would have been much greater. He writes: 'The large and powerful Expedition has borne the brunt of the wildness and folly of the people, while our uniform quiet, friendly behaviour has won for us a splendid name throughout the country, so that I believe no one, who knows us, would willingly do any harm to any one belonging to "Ingelezo."'

'Ingelezo' was the name by which the people distinguished Holman from the Belgians. Later, when other missionaries appeared on the scene, it became the general name for all, until the letters 'B.M.S.' were required to distinguish Bentley and his colleagues from other English missionaries. However, one name, the best too of all, the missionaries were able to rejoice in bearing together; it was that of 'Mindele mia Nzambi,' *i.e.*, 'God's white men.'

Although it was impossible for Holman to associate freely with the 'God-less' white men, on account of their morals, he was no narrow-

minded person full of prejudice against worldly authority and the 'powers that be'; he fully appreciated the Expedition for what it was worth. In one of his letters from Manyanga he writes: 'I do not see how we could ever be established at the Pool or up-river, without the Expedition. They make us fairly secure. Now, too, there is a motive for a native boy to learn carpentry, and other trades. Though trade brings other trouble with it, so long as the country is not swamped with spirits, it is also a great advantage.'

'When hostilities were at the worst between the Expedition and the natives, though unwilling to sell to the Zanzibaris, the people were anxious that we should have food for our boys. They arranged for our boys to go up to Ndandanga at dawn, and sold us rations for ten days, while the Belgians were at their wits' end for food. Even now things are far from square. They can scarcely get sufficient to satisfy their hunger, although my boys all have as much as they can possibly eat, whilst I have a store for the boat boys due to-morrow, and have also arranged for "chop" for the caravan which is due in two days. The Belgians do not know anything about the country language, and so do not know how

to get at the people. We have the advantage over them there. . . . We know how to get on with them, having been out a year or two, and can joke and chat and laugh with them, and that is a sure road to a darkey's heart. The State man will only say "Go away, go away," when they come to look at him, so they fear him whilst they like the lively Ingelezo.'

But the Belgian Expedition also profited by the vicinity of the missionaries. The advantages were by no means all on one side. There was, for example, a decided gain to the Expedition in the fact that Mr. Bentley's knowledge of medicine and surgery was freely at the service of any patient needing it, whether white or black. And the demands for such help were frequent.

In one of Holman's letters he says: 'I have had some fine practice in medicine and surgery here. Many of the Zanzibaris of the Expedition were sick, and came to me for medicine. Even those at Stanley Pool sent down to fetch it; so that the English Mission has a very good name with the Zanzibaris.'

In another letter he writes: 'Stanley's caravan *en route* for Stanley Pool was attacked by the natives, and four men were badly wounded. They came to me, I got out most of the shots, dressed their wounds every day, and

they soon got well. One man had his arm badly broken and smashed. I set it, and dressed it every day. It was necessary to keep the wound open a long time, to let out the little splinters of dead bone ; but he is all right now, and the other day I saw him cutting grass and chopping wood, using that arm.'

The medical work was a great help in acquiring the confidence and respect of the natives. That and his genial and uniform kindness gained for Bentley such influence over the natives that, although they were passing through troublous times with the Expedition, no one ever had a bad word to say about him. On the contrary, in all their troubles the people went to him for advice, and looked to him to help them in making peace. Many an internal war was averted, and many a Chief's life has been saved by his wise and patient dealing with them in times of extremity.

On one occasion a Chief from the north side told him that Makoso, the head of the new embassage, had been palavering with a south bank Chief, Lutete, who said that in allowing the A.I.A. people to put up a ferry-house by the river he opened and showed the road, and that all trouble had ensued from that. Holman asked the Chief, 'Who built the stone church at Banza Nsundi? The white men have

known and had that road to Mpumbu for over two hundred years, and plenty of white men have lived at Banza Nsundi. Why do these children born yesterday say that the white men shall not pass along the road their fathers had given to them, hundreds of years ago? Lutete has been very foolish. He had better make peace with the white men lest worse trouble should come. . . . The Expedition does no one any harm, and brings plenty of cloth and barter to your country. Yet you are discontented. As you are always quarrelling and fighting among yourselves, so you would be to us, your friends.' The Chief admitted that Holman spoke truly. 'So once again,' says Mr. Comber, 'we see trouble averted by his wise persuasion.' Of this affair he writes: 'Thanks to Bentley, who, by his careful diplomacy and his efforts to have the matter settled up peaceably, has earned for himself and for our Mission a golden name among the people.'

Bentley, indeed, from the first acquired great power over the natives. It has been said that 'power over mind as well as over matter is acquired by knowledge.' To the exact degree of a missionary's knowledge of the mind and character of the people, will be his influence over them; and this is probably the secret of Bentley's great power with the natives. From

the first he had set himself to *know* them, and to understand their modes of thought. In more than one letter he points out that the secret of the officer's lack of power was because 'they do not love the natives.' It was his love for the people that made him seek to understand them, and that was the key to his great influence over them. He would sit with them at their little fires as if he were one of them; indeed he himself remarks in a letter: 'I am glad to find the people of Congo are simple, homely folk with whom one can make friends. It makes it easier to follow Paul's example of becoming "all things to all men." How great a privilege is ours to be bearers to them of such glad tidings!'

Chapter VII

'In Journeyings Oft'

'God said: "Break thou these yokes; undo
These heavy burdens. I ordain
A work to last thy whole life through,
A ministry of strife and pain."

He set his face against the blast,
His feet against the flinty shard,
Till the hard service grew at last,
Its own exceeding great reward.'

WHITTIER.

BUT although they had found the way to Stanley Pool in February, 1881, it was not until the end of July, 1882, that the station to which they gave the name of Arthington was established. All the interval was taken up with transport work preparatory to establishing themselves at the Pool. Had they been more in number it would not have been so long a task, and the delay caused by lack of reinforcements both hampered and tried them sorely.

Mr. Comber, in one of his letters, gives a calculation that 'at the lowest computation *six*

are needed for the work,' which was then in the hands of only two, 'Bentley and myself.' Writing on September 2, 1881, from Manyanga, Holman reports that the Isangila station was left in charge of three boys, and in the *Missionary Herald* of April, 1882, Mr. Comber says: 'Bentley is making a rush to Musuka,' adding, 'Our life seems made up of rushing about just now.' He, too, wonders that it is so difficult to find six volunteers for the Mission, quoting Holman's saying, 'If it were a gold-mine we had discovered, it would be easy to find men willing to come.' In another letter Holman says: 'A Belgian officer told me the other day that he was selected out of two hundred applicants. Two hundred applicants for a small post under the Belgian State, and not even six are ready to give themselves to the work of winning Africa for Christ!'

With wise foresight Holman writes in November, 1882:—

'I see that Mr. Comber, in his letter, is urging that, if possible, further additions to the Mission staff be made as soon as possible. Might I suggest one special reason for the speedy despatch of more help? It was not so very difficult for us to make a footing in Congo, where there was some knowledge of a European

language; but it will scarcely be wise for new brethren, fresh from home, to be dropped straightway alone among the wild savages of the Upper River. The chances of their being eaten up under such circumstances are not the most remote. . . . Men for forward stations should have six months' experience at the very least, if possible more, before they proceed. The man with some experience and common sense might go among the people and make good headway; but a new man, not knowing their language, and unused to their customs, might easily make a mistake, and bring about a great disaster. Nor should the intermediate stations, with so large a transport as ours is to manage, and such difficult people to deal with, be left to inexperienced men. It might cause a collapse and a break in the line of communication, and all the stations up the line would suffer.' He adds: 'We have constantly to feel that there is but a faint perception at home of the enormous possibilities before us on the thousands of miles of waterway now open to us, and of which the Arthington station is the key and gateway. . . . It seems almost an impertinence for me to try to urge Mr. Comber's plea, but what else can I do, my dear Mr. Baynes, when this is the waking thought in the

morning, the burden on my mind all day; when this work and this field have our hearts, our lives, our every energy? I know that you will feel the need we urge; yes, and do all that you can to urge it upon the Churches.'

The transport work in those days was a very serious business, and the few missionaries, who had to share it between them, often found themselves in great straits; but all worked bravely, shoulder to shoulder, though it seems that Mr. Comber and Holman did more of the travelling than most of the others.

The route to the Pool was at that time from Musuka to Vivi by water, hence to Baynesville or Isangila, about seventy miles over rough quartz hills, a weary foot journey. From Baynesville to Manyanga they were able to avail themselves of some sixty miles of navigable waterway, of which there were many descriptions, all agreeing in this one thing—that it was a 'wild and raging river,' well-nigh impassable, needing great nerve and ingenuity.

But the hard journeys to Isangila and dangerous passage of the 'fierce swirling river' just near there, made both Mr. Comber and Holman feel that they ought to seek a safer road to the Pool. Gradually they shifted their base station from Musuka to Tunduwa, some fifteen miles up

on the left bank, which spot they called Underhill; and the station at Isangila was shifted to near Vunda, a fine piece of headland running out into the river, also on the south bank, which they named Bayneston. By this they saved thirty miles of difficult cataract work, though it necessitated fifteen miles extra overland.

That the river work was attended with no little danger may be inferred from the following extracts from letters. Mr. Crudgington wrote: 'In some places we had beautiful stretches of fine, calm water. At other places we had to proceed very carefully, as there were rapids and fierce boiling whirlpools. . . . I made one or two journeys up the river with Bentley to Manyanga, and I shall never forget his skill in the navigation of the boat at most difficult points of the river.'

Holman himself wrote in one of his first letters from Manyanga: 'I do not know what the other passages are like, but the way the captain chose to cross the river was among rocks, some points of which were only eighteen inches under water, so that we were about two hours on and off rocks, sometimes shooting a race, then holding on tight for the next shock, only getting off from one rock to get on to another. There are other channels, but the captain took this one, as the others, though deeper, have still rougher

water. I must say that the folks here seemed horribly afraid of what they call "strong water," their fear often leading them into threefold danger, besides lengthening the journey and much increasing the labour of pulling. This channel at Roubela was a sample of it. It is a duty to be careful, but sometimes fear will lead into worse danger!'

In December, 1881, Bentley's letters were dated from Vana, where they camped until the Isangila station was built. In February he wrote from Isangila, in April from Manyanga. In June he is back again at Baynesville, and in July just manages to catch a sailing ship going to Loango, being mercifully kept from travelling by the 'Ethiopia,' which was wrecked on the Loango coast. In October he is once more back at Manyanga, and in January his letters are again written from the Pool. The whole of 1883 was spent much in the same way, partly at Stanley Pool; then hurrying to one or other of the intermediate stations, right up to the time of his first furlough in the spring of 1884. Holman once reports having done the distance from Stanley Pool to Vivi in 'ten days' hard marching.' It must have been 'hard marching,' indeed, as the usual average for the carriers, burdened with loads weighing usually between

60 and 65 lbs., is about twenty miles a day; whilst on this journey the average was not less than twenty-five, and all was done on foot without even the help of a hammock.

At this time some friends of the Mission were disposed to criticise the missionaries spending so much time in rough transport work and travelling, on the ground that this did not bear directly on real Mission work. But what other course was possible? There were no shops at which to buy food, no Banks at which to get English money exchanged for foreign currency; there was no currency even; every little thing they did purchase had to be obtained by barter. Again, there were no trains to bring up the stock of goods for barter, no carriage-roads, no canals. They could only proceed from town to town on foot, and all their needed goods had to be carried by men. Bearing in mind that the distance between Stanley Pool and Vivi was some two hundred and twenty odd miles, and that there were no hotels, or even small country inns in which to put up for the night, the need to take both food and tent becomes evident. The marvel is not that the missionaries spent so much time in travelling, but that they did it so cheerfully.

Whatever the difficulties or hardships, Holman Bentley never fussed over them. We seldom

heard of them from him, unless it were to record some special instance of God's fatherly care, as in the case of a large branch of a tree which fell down within a foot of the place where he lay asleep. Still he had his share of real road troubles like all the rest. On one occasion he writes :—

'I had to start again on Tuesday though, while the fever was still hanging about me. At three o'clock it began to rain, and increased, pouring down not "cats and dogs" but "elephants and hippopotami," until every path was a torrent. We hoped to reach a Zanzibaris' shelter; but to our dismay, when we got to the camping spot at Mpambu Ndolo, we found everything had been burnt. There was no shelter for us nearer than eight miles' march. The rain was still falling, and I had been wet to the skin for nearly three hours, and in a fever, every joint shaking, and so cold and stiff that I could scarcely stoop. I could have sat down and cried in my utter misery, but I thought it better to pitch the tent. Some boys brought wood, and I had fortunately a little palm oil with me; this, on a piece of rag, soon started a fire in the tent. The boys cut me a little grass (wet, of course), and made me a bed on the ground. In a few minutes I slipped off my wet things, and was between my rugs.'

As a rule Holman Bentley soon got over his fevers. The joy of success was exhilarating, and no sooner was he able to be about again than he set to work with full energy. We can read his satisfaction between the lines of the following letter, written in the latter part of the year 1883 :—

'Our transport has been most successful and rapid; the "Peace" is at the Pool; only a little spare gear remaining, which is now on the road. The whole steamer, as well as station goods, has all been transported in about six months. In another month's time it will be finished, and we shall have time to breathe. The most optimistic would hardly have dreamt of such rapid transit. Stanley, a year and a half ago, laughed at the idea of our being able to obtain a single native carrier between here and the Pool. Our difficulties were very great, but one by one they are being steadily overcome. The strain upon us is often intense; but our great Master is with us, and gives us the daily guidance, and strength for daily needs, clearing away the darkness and perplexity for the next step—but often only for the next, until the time comes for yet another. This is all that we need, and we have always found that strange incomprehensible delays have worked out only for good.'

Here at home it may not be easy to realise the amount of labour and strain involved in arranging loads and rations for large caravans. Yet on one occasion he mentions having given out loads to 258 carriers in one day! It was in this way that the work, which had been calculated to require two years, had been crowded into six months.

Up to this time transport and building so filled up their time that real missionary work had been almost impossible; but when opportunities for teaching did occur they were not wasted. On one occasion, in the early days, Mr. Bentley was without candles. The boat had come up, but the candles asked for had not been sent. A light was improvised with palm oil and a bit of wick, but it was a 'maximum of smoke with a minimum of light.' By such light conversation went on with the natives, and so time was well employed. The sun goes down at six o'clock, and it is quite dark in less than half an hour afterwards. The long evenings were largely spent thus, especially in talks with Nlemvo.

In one of his letters Mr. Bentley says: 'We may not be able to speak of converts in the first times, but we know that good and holy influences are at work in hearts once utterly dark.' So, too, Mr. Crudgington writes: 'The value of his

work at Manyanga, on the north bank, can never be overestimated. He gained immense influence over the Chiefs, and was of great help to some of Stanley's people who were involved in difficulties with some of the towns.'

Of course the work was as yet unavoidably more of the *practice* than the *preaching* of Christianity; but as Mr. Bentley said in one of his letters—'the foundation is really as important a part of a building as that which appears above ground. . . . The first thing to do with such people as these is to win some measure of respect, and, if there is such a thing, affection, and to gain influence. That we have done; the people like us and trust us. The name of Ingelezo is known about the country as the name of the good white man living by the riverside, by the Ntomvo Creek. Lots of children come down every day to sell bark, plantain roots, &c., as an excuse to talk and laugh and play with the white man. I saw one fat little fellow the other day; I should think he must be under five years old. He had brought some string to sell with the other boys. I thought he was hardly old enough to run about like that, but when I tried to buy his string he made as much noise as if he were a grown-up man. When they want to sell anything, say, for

a penny, they first ask threepence, and talk, talk, talk for a long time. They like to talk to a white man, so they try to find something to sell; and they like me because I talk and play with them.'

Funny little admixtures of childhood and manhood they are, as unconcerned as English children when they do play, but with almost an adult's instinct and cuteness for self-preservation. And here again at Manyanga friendship with the children won the confidence of the mothers and other relatives. The 'women,' he writes, 'bring down food, and no man fears to send his wife to Ingelezo's station. It is a mystery to them as to what we are here for—"They buy fowls and goats and other food, but they do not buy ivory or slaves. But they are good. If any one is sick they will give medicine, and not ask anything for it." They often come to me as a last resource, and generally soon recover, which gives them more confidence in Ingelezo's medicine than in their witch-doctor's potions.'

Mr. Comber tells in one of his letters of 'A poor lad, with ulcers so putrid that even the natives are disgusted, turning up on the station. His own people refuse to give him food and water any longer, and the boys refuse to have him sleep in their house on account of the smell

of his sores. But Bentley takes him in, and cares for him. Yet the youth evinces no gratitude, but grumbles at everything, and, instead of attending to the cleansing of his sores himself, he requires that they be done for him. When, after ten days, he was told that he was now so far on that he should do it himself, he ran away! But his people brought him back. Once Bentley sent him to market to buy food for himself, and he came back drunk, having used the money to buy palm wine. What a specimen! But even though the patience and kindness may be wasted on the lad himself, there are others who take note of it, and learn from it the Christlike life.'

Chapter VIII

'A People in Darkness'

'*Evil darkly reigneth,*
Nought of love remaineth.'
BONAR.

MR. BENTLEY'S letters from Manyanga about this time show us the character of the people he sought to win, and their manner of life. He has, for example, to tell of a man arranging with a witch-doctor for the death of his own son. Witchcraft, with all its attendant evils of deceit, murder, and bloodshed, was depopulating the country. Every month or six weeks some person would be killed on the accusation of witchcraft. Any accusation might be trumped up. If a man were rich and did not give away to every one who begged from him, he was declared to be a witch and killed. If any one showed any particular skill, he was pronounced a witch and killed. If a woman was industrious at her farm, and thus had a better harvest than others, she was considered a witch and killed. Often, when a sick person dreamed,

the one he or she saw in a dream was sure to be regarded as bewitching the patient, and had therefore to be done away with lest the sick one die. 'It is impossible,' says Mr. Bentley, 'to describe the terribly degrading effect of this system, at which every one laughs until it is his turn to suffer.'

The way in which the witches were supposed to be discovered was in the administering of a cup of poison. The Ngang'angombo (witch-doctor) would be called in to find out the witch. He would appoint a certain day for the people of the village to assemble in his presence. By certain ceremonies he would pretend to discover the guilty ones, and they would be called upon to prove their innocence by drinking the test cup. If they vomited, their innocence was proved ; if they were guilty, the Nkasa would kill them. Of course everybody, in full assurance of his innocence, appeared at these trial scenes, because to remain away would indicate the fear of being found out. Many would without any hesitation drink the Nkasa. But there was so much opportunity for underhand dealings, bribery, or paying off old scores, that those who were a little experienced in these things knew there was little hope of life for any one doomed to drink the Nkasa poison.

Once a baby died of teething convulsions. A

witch-doctor was called to tell who had caused the child's death. The witch-doctor pointed out three men and three women. Thus six people were to be killed because of the death from natural causes of one little baby.

When Holman heard of it, he asked what day the poison was to be given, and some one told him. When the people realised that he knew the day fixed for the execution, they killed five of the six before the time arrived, knowing that he would save the people's lives somehow if they did not forestall him. The sixth man would have shared the same fate, but he managed to run away.

Writing about another case, Mr. Bentley says: 'Once we heard that a woman had been killed as a witch, and that a man who was to have shared the same fate had run away. The next day I heard he had been caught. Taking Jose and Nlemvo, I immediately started off to Ndanganga, not waiting for breakfast, as delay might be dangerous. We arrived at the town, and hastened to find the victim. A good run brought us upon the scene, late, but still in time. The man, apparently dead, was being dragged by a rope round his neck to be burned. The rain was pouring. I drove off the fellow who was dragging the body, and ordered away another

man with a gun. The body appeared lifeless, lying on the face, the back of his head a mass of blood, beaten by a stick, and cut to the bone in eight places. As I bent over him he gasped. I turned him over, and the cool rain somewhat revived him. He turned upon his side, but was unconscious. The people wanted to know what I wanted.

'"To carry him down to the station."

'"No, let us burn him."

'They had clubbed him to prevent any escape, when the drenching rain drove them into a house.

'I stayed by the man and sent Jose to get a stick to carry him with. For three-quarters of an hour he could not get a stick, nor a cutlass to cut one with. No one would help us or lend us anything. I had nothing with me more serious than a pocket-knife. At last, in another part of the town, a stick was found. The man who had been dragging the body now appeared with a gun, probably to show that he would like to have a shot; but I sent him away. People demurred. Some said they would bring him to us to-morrow; others said, "No, if we do not kill him, he will fight us when he gets better."

'Meanwhile, with Nlemvo's and some other boys' loin-cloths, and some strips of plantain

bark, we tied the unconscious victim to our stick, and before they could do anything, or get over their surprise, Jose and I shouldered the burden, and trotted off. We did not stop to rest until we were through the town and half-way up the hill. The stick, or something, was very heavy, and I wanted my breakfast badly, but we pushed on as fast as we could. Jose had the bow, Nlemvo and I took turn and turn about at the other end of the pole. We were in a nasty mess—our coats and hands, &c., full of blood. Near one town some people met us. I thought they might shoot as we passed, so I covered the body by walking beside him. Panting we reached the last descent, where we waited for our Kroo boys to whom we had sent a message to call them to meet us. Three miles of carrying had made me stiff all over.

'We got him safely here, and on examination I found great pieces of the scalp were loose. One piece hung back about two square inches, cut to the bone in several places. We carefully washed and cleansed the wounds, tying up everything with lint dipped in carbolised water, and clapped mustard plasters to his calves. Twice in the evening he came to a bit, yesterday he pulled the bandages off his head; there is very little discharge and healthy edges. He eats and is

conscious, although inclined to sleep. He wants to go to the town to get some palm wine, and says no one will think of hurting him!

'The Ndanganga Chiefs came down and asked Jose to buy him for a hundred *pieces* (red, trade handkerchiefs), but he laughed at them. We found him as good as dead, they wanted to burn him, and now they asked such a price! When I had finished paying some carriers, they came to discuss the matter with me. They had still more people condemned as witches in the town. I told them to bring them all here, and I would send them away elsewhere; but if they ill-treated them first, they would get nothing. As to my patient, they will see whether he gets better before they discuss him. They are given to understand that they will get very little for him, but will only consent to his being allowed to live at all on condition that he is sent far away where he cannot hurt them. He lies in chains, for the people tell me candidly if they catch him off the station they will kill him.

'Nlemvo tells us that the people used to come to the station to see how this man was getting on. When they found him recovering they wondered, and asked, "By what power the missionary had made him get better again?' They begged us not, on any account, to let the

man return to the town, for they were afraid of his bewitching other people.'

In about a month's time the man recovered, and actually ventured back to his town, to get some palm wine! Of course, Holman sent after him immediately; his life was not safe in the town. When caught, he quite pooh-poohed any possibility of danger. 'His people could never think of harming him!' 'Since then,' Holman writes, 'he is compelled to lie in a chain.' The man died in December, 1883. In another letter a detailed account of the case is given, the inflammation of the brain, &c., described, but that is too long to quote here.

The following account has been given before, but it cannot be left out of any survey of Dr. Bentley's life, showing us, as it does, his tact in dealing with the people :—

'The other day the big Chief Tawanlongo was declared a witch. Matuza Mbongo's wife had dreamt of Tawanlongo shortly before she died, and Matuza Mbongo, a secondary Chief, is making use of it to clear away his last obstacle to the Head-chieftainship. The people are bad, and only too glad to have the excitement of another execution to look forward to; it would be great fun to them to see their Chief reel and fall, and then to throw him on the fire. Of course, the

accused knows he is innocent and is ready to take the ordeal, in the belief that his innocence will be established. As soon as I heard of it I expressed my displeasure pretty freely, and offered Tawanlongo to send him down river in the "Plymouth"; but he said if he ran away they would say he was guilty, and as he knew he was innocent, he, of course, preferred to drink the Nkasa. They will not allow that it is a poison. It is believed that some spirit in power—god, witch, or whatever it is—will help the innocent man, and that decides the action of the poison. A day or two ago Tawanlongo called me up to the town. I went up, and sat under the same tree where we were fired at a few months ago. I knew that there was nothing to fear, and that even that piece of cowardice had not been intended for me.

'Tawanlongo had been arranging his matters in the prospect of death, and all the Chiefs and great men, wished to ask me some questions privately in the town about some other palaver. Having them all present, I seized the opportunity to talk about the witchcraft affair, reasoning with them a bit about the foolishness of the superstition. Fowls, goats, all animals, trees, &c., die—and don't men? Then I told them of our short term here before an endless future;

that our lives were in God's hands, and so forth. I urged them on all these grounds to do nothing to their Chief, both because he was my friend, and a great man with the white men. Of Matuza himself I asked, in a whisper, why he pressed such an affair. "To-day we hear that Tawanlongo is a witch, he must take 'Nkasa' and die; to-morrow we shall hear the same of Matuza Mbongo." Why was he such a fool as to do this wickedness? He told me to be quiet lest any one should hear, but his hand for some time trembled as he sat there. I also expressed the same sentiment to all concerned, avoiding personalities. Some of those sitting round began to say that they would make him take the cup; others began to mutter the magic word "nsatu" (hunger), and slunk off. Finally the principal Chief promised me that, after what I said, they would not press the "Nkasa"; but that if they let my friend Tawanlongo off I must give them a goat to make a feast and a dance. That I said I would do, but added "Take care you don't eat my goat and then go and kill Tawanlongo; if you do, don't come to visit me any more." They promised not to do that. I believe that they will let him off. Then we shall have a good handle to work Tawanlongo, and perhaps to check much of

that devilry. It can be turned to good account.

'Early next morning an important man from the town came to tell me that they must give the "Nkasa," after all, and begged me to accept a calabash of palm wine and not be angry. I said I would never consent to this. I asked him why the Ndanganga people said it was not my palaver. It *was* my palaver, because God had sent me to teach them. True, if they killed Tawanlongo, I should do nothing. I would not burn their town, but the matter would be in my Master's hands. The men said he would go at once and stop the affair. They should not kill him—it was wrong all round. So I sent Nlemvo and another back with him to the town, but they were too late—they found that he had just drunk the "Nkasa." But being afraid to follow the ordinary custom, the people as a compromise, to quiet the war party, had only given him about an eighth of the ordinary quantity, just enough to make him vomit. A day or two after Tawanlongo sent me a message to express his thanks—

'"Thank you, Ingelezo; it is all you, no one else helped me; you spoke for me and the people were afraid, so they did not try to kill me. You have saved my life, Ingelezo."'

'I told him that now he must try hard to stop the bad custom. I hope indeed that this will be a beginning of the end of Nkasa. But they will not give up their bad passions all at once. This is the first time we have been able to make a direct attack on the custom which is such a fearful curse to the country, and it is well that we have commenced on a big Chief."'

Later on when Mr. Bentley had protection powers from the State, he put up the blue State flag on the verandah of his house, so that all who came to the station might be reminded to come to him if they were in any trouble. And so they did. He was frequently engaged in hearing particulars of quarrels, and acting as peacemaker between the parties at feud. Sometimes whole days would be spent in these palavers. When at last the contending parties had left, which they seldom did until late in the afternoon, the remembrance of impending darkness would force them to seek some settlement —he would come in, tired out with the strain and say to me sadly, 'Another day gone, and nothing to show for it; have not done any translation at all!'

Another cause of much trouble was polygamy. It was whilst at Manyanga that Holman took up a definite attitude towards the question. Poly-

gamy is common over the whole of the Congo, though with differences arising from local circumstances. Still it was a matter about which the missionaries needed to have some clear and uniform rule of conduct. Mr. Bentley, with a true stateman's insight, realised that the *causes* must be done away with if the wrong was to be effectually righted. The ideas of the advisability of new conditions had to be undermined by the teaching of Christ. Many difficult problems, arising out of the intricate and polygamous customs of the country, confronted the missionaries in those early days. Both Mr. Comber and Mr. Bentley were of the opinion that to urge the men to retain one wife only was out of the question as long as the women did not acquiesce ; and, strange to say, the women, both through pride as well as laziness, were as hard to win over to desire Christian marriage laws as the men.

A girl once said to me, 'I wouldn't be the only wife of a man, and have to cook and work for him every day! Me only one! Not a bit of it!'

Drunkenness was another evil ; but as years went by there was, in our district, a marked improvement in this matter, not only through Mr. Bentley suggesting to the Government that

the area in which the sale of alcohol was permissible should be restricted, but especially by the conversion of the natives to Christianity.

As for slavery, that also existed, but happily it was not such a great evil there as in some other parts of Africa. No man's life was safe; but he felt more security under the protection of some powerful Chief than otherwise; and for this reason, many a man has sold himself as slave to some Chief; the only way in which it affected him being that he had to live in his Chief's town instead of his own.

Greed was another weakness of the people. Nlemvo tells us that, 'One day they came to a village where some one was very sick; so the Doctor gave this man a dose of medicine. On returning the same way and asking the man if he were better, he replied that he was quite well, and also requested the Doctor to pay him for having taken the medicine!

As to the personal appearance of the Congoese. They have the Bantu type faces, which is a decided improvement on the thick-lipped, low-fronted, type of the true Ethiopian. In Congo proper the people do not cut and disfigure their faces; but at the Pool they have a most unpleasant custom of shaving the eyebrows, and cutting off and pulling

out the eyelashes, filing the teeth, and marking the face, in a way which is far from pleasant to the European eye. Thus one old lady at Stanley Pool, whose appearance early attracted notice, had rubbed her skin with oil and red bakula powder, and had smeared yellow ochre round her eyes. She looked hideous. All women have their hair carefully done up in plaits and chignons. The Bayansi braid their hair into a long horn reaching out in front. Other tribes have two horns just above the ears. They are generally rather particular about their toilet.

Of some, however, it would be said that they were Nature's gentlemen and ladies. 'In one town where we found the Chief absent, we were received by his wife, who sent us a cassava pudding and a fowl which she had cooked, and with easy, gracious manner, pointed out the towns of the great Chiefs around. Although as scantily dressed, and living in the same sort of grass huts as the other women in the town, her superiority and refinement struck us.'

As to the social life and government of the people, the following account was furnished by Mr. Bentley himself.

The people are divided into patriarchal

families, the families into households. Each household has its head, and each clan also, although they may be distributed in as many as twenty to thirty families.

The village where the head of the clan lives is called Mbanza, the depending villages are called Mavanga. The Mavanga are often divided into groups of houses called 'belo'; the head of the belo is a vassal of the Chief. He is surrounded by his wives, some relations, some slaves, and probably a few friends to whom he gives protection, and who help him. Formerly only the Chiefs of the villages were called Mfumu, now 'Mfumu' is the synonym for any free man. The tribes are mixed by inter-marriages. The personal power of a Chief is not very great. When his wishes coincide with the wishes of his people he is the head, but the feet may refuse to carry him, and the arms refuse to work. Power is hereditary through the mother. In Congo, any affair relating to the clan will be brought before the head of the clan. Anything relating to the family, will be brought before the head of the family. The fetish doctors are never called in any judicial affairs. War can only be declared by permission of the Chief of the district. A declaration of

war is made at sundown, followed by gunshots at dawn.

The right of the soil in any district belongs to the Chief of the Mbanza; each town has its own rights of soil, but any individual may plant wherever the ground is unoccupied, as long as it is in their own district.

Chapter IX

Arthington at Last!

'The most beautiful and complete lives are those that are given up to the service of others.'

THE object of the Mission being to evangelise the inland tribes, it is no wonder that the missionaries could not feel easy in their minds until they had established themselves at Stanley Pool, from whence they could reach the 'Hinterland' by steamer. But although the Pool was discovered in 1881, the missionaries were, through lack of helpers, unable to start building there until about eighteen months later. Dr. Bentley felt very keenly the absence of fresh help from home.

In a letter dated July, 1882, he wrote :—

'It is a disgrace that although we reached the Pool one and a half years ago, we cannot yet advance to possess it. The people who sent the Belgian Expedition are pushing rapidly forward at great expense, after the riches they think *may* be found out here. What should be done to save the perishing souls we *know* are here?

What better, happier, holier thing could you live for than to tell these poor wild people of the Saviour's love?

'If I might add a personal word it would be just to say that missionary work has exceeded my highest hopes in happiness and interest. Life is indeed worth living out here; and if even permitted to sow only a few tiny seeds, one can rejoice in the *sure and certain* hope of the harvest, which may be seen only by those who come after, but for which we can trust Christ, knowing that He must reign.'

To his brother he writes:—

'My ideal is here; I do find it often a hard, rough life, but would not on any account exchange it for an easier. Anxiety, worry, trial, weariness—if they were increased tenfold, the deep sense of the need of these people, and the peculiar joys of the work, would not allow the troubles or difficulties to sway the determination for an instant. There is an influence that makes this work an instinct. It was this that brought me here, and keeps me to the work.'

In another home letter, dated about the same time, he says:—

'Stanley has just returned from the Falls. The whole river, for 1,200 miles, is open; altogether there are most likely two or three thousand

more on the great affluents. Great lakes discovered, the shores of which are said to be thickly populated. A great population is therefore to be reached by this river, all of whom are living in the deepest of heathen darkness. Never by any chance have they heard of God's love, or of Jesus Christ their Saviour. . . . But it is no use rushing on with a hop, skip, and a jump, and then have our communications fail. Slowly and steadily must the foundations be laid upon which we trust that a substantial edifice may be raised. We have been marvellously preserved in health and strength, while others near us have fallen. We have been encouraged by many unmistakable tokens of Divine help and blessing; our only trouble is our short-handedness. One man alone cannot do much more than forward the goods, and keep the station going. . . . We hear talk of economy, but there is no economy in that, nor in starting stations short of material, and without complete arrangements as to details, for the things must be had sooner or later, and wasted energy is the only result of working with insufficient tools.'

On one occasion, when Mr. Comber was alone at the Pool, and Holman at Manyanga, he writes :—

'A few days ago a caravan of the A.I.A.

brought me a letter dictated by Mr. Comber. He has had another of those terrible hæmaturic fevers. He placed the drugs all handy, and told his boy what to do when he became delirious. When he wrote the worst symptoms had abated, but they had left him very weak. He was alone —and why? Because, instead of the ready response to our appeal for help, which we had every right and reason to expect, we have been left by our comrades at home to hold and work the position we had been sent to take, all by ourselves.'

At last, in a letter from Loango in August, 1882, Holman was able to report that they had arranged to settle at the Pool.

'We have at last commenced at Stanley Pool. I was there a month ago with Mr. Comber, and he then agreed with the chief agent of the Expedition over the piece of territory they have bought at Stanley Pool. We have left a boy in charge, and are sending up stores. Mr. Comber will go up and build as soon as I return.'

The Pool itself is described by Dr. Bentley as follows:—

'The Pool is about three hundred miles from the coast in a straight line, but to get there one has to leave the river at about 120 miles from the coast, and pass a mountainous region, which

means a walk of four hundred miles. The Pool is about five times as big as the Isle of Wight, and in the centre one cannot see the mainland from a canoe. Above the Pool are some white cliffs, which reminded Stanley of the cliffs of Dover, and to which he accordingly gave that name. It was hoped that they would be of calcareous matter, but they are nothing but the whitest silver sand. They are about 180 feet high, and form a very grand entrance of the river into the Pool. They are very beautiful, like the many-buttressed walls of a great cathedral. The river there is about two and three-quarter miles wide; at the first cataract it is about two miles broad. There is a large island in it on which live many elephants and buffalos; natives go and hunt there sometimes. The Pool is about eighteen miles long. The current is so strong that, coming down with the stream, about five hours are spent in dropping across it in a canoe. It is encircled by lofty hills at a distance of about seven miles from its shore. The seven miles intervening is low and flat, gently rising towards the base of the hills.'

When Holman accompanied Mr. Comber on his first visit to the Pool in 1881, Nga Liema, the great Chief at Ntamo, seemed very pleased to see him again, and recognised him at once.

They told him about the Mission; that they understood medicine, that if white men were sick they called for them, and that they wished to help his people, just as they would their white brothers; and further that if he would send his 'boys' they would teach them many things good to know. He seemed highly pleased, and anxious that they should soon build there.

'The result,' wrote Holman, 'was eminently satisfactory. We joked with several of his people, and made ourselves generally agreeable.

'We stayed there about three hours, chatted with the people, made friends with some of them, and wondered that they were the same people who had been so savage on the first occasion.

'Not long after we were sent for by the old Chief, who was sick. We gladly went the next day, and gave him some medicine. There was no more bluster or rudeness. In fact, when we walked about in the town the children crowded round us, playing and chatting as we walked about.

'Sometimes I can catch a little fellow when he is not looking, and he is on my shoulder before he knows where he is. They all laugh and enjoy the fun, but won't let me catch any more that day. They like to wonder at our

watches, and the compasses that guided us on the road, a small musical box, a spinning top, &c.

'Another wild Chief, named Bankwa, sent to say he would like us to build in his town and buy his ivory. I paid him a visit, and reached the town while he was out. We found it a large, populous place. The people were very noisy and rude (although I went with his man, who told them who I was); we felt far from comfortable. They took off our interpreter's hat and put it on some man's head, who threw it among the crowd. They swarmed quite closely round, and when we told them to sit down they laughed quite rudely. I noticed one man touch his spear, and with his empty hand make a motion of throwing it at us, and then he and his mate laughed as though it would be great fun. We hoped that Bankwa would soon come, that we might have a little more peace. This noisy insolence might easily develop into violence. The people are really strong savages. We can now form our opinion of the people very quickly, and knew that we were not among friends. They know they cannot harm the powerful Expedition, but they do not believe us as to our reasons for coming to them.

'After a bad quarter of an hour Bankwa

arrived, and we went to see him. He soon made every one to be silent and seated. We told him that we had made friends with Ntjulu, and now he had asked us to visit him and we had come. He said he was glad we had come. We gave him a large hand-bell, in return for which he gave us a goat and wished us to come again, and stay a day or two in his town. Like his people, he too is a savage, and though he behaved well, he is a man on no account to be trusted. A savage is impulsive, and follows those impulses. He is a wild, untamed animal, and scarcely regards or fears any one or anything.

'But although they are savages, they are fine people to work amongst, and superior in every way to those between them and the coast. For a man must have some dash and spirit to be a savage; in that they are more hopeful than the dull, stupid, degraded race, such as we have met elsewhere. I do not think we shall be eaten up just yet. We have won their confidence and goodwill to a remarkable extent. They are rich through their ivory trade. Their canoes are very fine and well carved, paddles of hard wood tastefully carved. All dress decently, and many are even well dressed. We hope that we shall soon be on terms of friendship. We must, however, be wise

and cautious. Caution with action at the right moment may do what blundering haste may destroy at any time. But this tentative state and policy has been our normal condition, and has not been by any means unsuccessful. . . . Haste and delay are equally dangerous. The best thing is to know when the time is there, and then act at once.'

Of the population further inland nothing definitely was known, but the missionaries had already been told to expect wilder and still more uncertain people up-river, some of whom were reported to be fierce, warlike, and even addicted to cannibalism. When Stanley and his people passed down for the first time, they shot at them as at a hippopotamus, and cried out, 'Nyama, Nyama' (*'meat'*) when they saw the white skin. 'I have seen,' wrote Dr. Bentley, 'white ants attack live charcoal, and the natives' thinking of attacking Stanley's force seems to be a parallel. But if only the savagery be withheld, there is good-nature and every possibility. Reckless, unreasoning, fickle, cruel, warlike, savage as wild beasts, lazy and hungry are these people whom some consider to need no gospel, or other interference.'

The Bateke of Ntamo, too, are rather inclined to be insolent. They are so used to bullying

the Bakongo and Bazombo traders, that something of the same attitude is sometimes shown even towards white men. Now and then a young swell will facetiously offer his left hand to greet you, or will be looking at everything else but you, until obliged to recognise your presence. Several of these little tricks have been tried on. It is only foolishness, for they like us, but they are troubled with a very lofty idea of themselves. We have not been interfered with in any way, and as we do not cross the interests of the natives, we enjoy in a large measure their confidence. Here again ivory seems the cause of all the trouble. It is a very real trouble, for by their ivory trade, and some indiarubber, these people obtain all their salt, cloth, hoop-iron, powder, &c.

On one occasion, fearing that their little trade in ivory would suffer through the Belgian Expedition, they laid an ambuscade with the intention of killing a passing white man. Ten guns were discharged at him from as many paces. He received a slug through the muscles of his arm, and his cook fell dead on the spot.

After the attack, and perhaps still more after the punishments which followed it, the

missionaries felt that the usual route on the north bank was safe only to strong, well-armed caravans. But no other route was open at that time. Then Holman Bentley remembered his outstanding promise to pay a visit to a Chief named Makito. Makito was of high rank in the district in his mother's right, but was the son of a Nteke slave. Although a young man, hardly more than twenty-five years of age, he had already a great name. When he went to the coast that year, it was said that a thousand people joined his caravan. His town was about twenty miles east of Manyanga on the south bank, and near a very important market, Konso Makwekwe. In the early days Lutete, the Chief of Ngombe, and his friend Makito, of Matadi, had attacked some caravans of the Expedition, which resulted in the burning of part of his town. When they came to make peace with the Expedition at Manyanga, Dr. Bentley helped them and won their friendship, and they then desired him to visit them.

'Now,' writes Mr. Bentley, 'was the time to redeem my promise, and hoping that it might result in finding an alternative thoroughfare between the coast and the Pool, we went to pay the long-promised visit to Makito.'

Nlemvo tells us that they started off with a number of Kroo boys to find the road, and by following the paths from village to village, and consulting the compass as to the direction, they discovered how to reach the coast. Although the people in the hidden villages did not like any Europeans to pass that way, Holman was able to make friends with them. He told them that he had not come to destroy their towns or do them any harm, but just to visit his friend Makito, and make it safe for any one to pass along that road who wanted to go to the coast to buy and sell goods. A steamer, also, was going to be sent, and he would be glad if some of them would help to carry it up to the Pool; they would be given good pay. The people were glad to hear about this, and promised to help in the conveying of the steamer. Indeed, when the 'Peace' came, a large number of carriers from this district helped to carry her.

On returning Holman writes: 'We were well received, and spent three and a half days among them. We had won their goodwill, and felt that the road *viâ* the south bank was safe, at any rate for a time.' So once again he justly bore the name of 'Komba Nzila.'

Not long after his return from this trip to the Pool, he writes: 'We were able to get several carriers from Makito's district. . . . I have paid off the first caravan to-day. They took their pay very quietly, without demanding three times the stipulated pay. I have had Congos threaten to burn the house down, because I would not consent to pay them twice as much as had been agreed upon. Paying off a lot of carriers is often a very difficult business; they threaten, bully, bluster, beg, refuse, storm, until they find it is no use, and that they will get nothing more. When all the "trying it on" is over they accept their pay, grow pleasant, chaff, and inquire when next we shall be wanting them. It requires no little amount of patience and good-humour and self-control to be able to "manage" a blustering crowd of carriers.'

His letters at this time give vivid pictures of the people and their ways. 'Another tribe represented at the Pool is the Bayansi. They are quiet folk, and are very friendly. They can be strong and savage too in their own country. I frequently go into the town and always like to visit their quarter. They build small huts together, forming a street. They sit chatting under

wall-less roofs in their "piazza." Often when I have gone to see them, one will be beating brass wire out of their brass rods, another working out a bracelet, another making a fish spear, another taking a gun to pieces to clean it, another making a looking-glass out of a small piece of mirror and the head of a powder keg. Others are sprawling on the ground, their heads in their women's laps, while their long hair is carefully plaited, and made into the characteristic "horns" of their tribe. Other groups are counting cloths and brass rods, while others pack copper, smelted by the natives near Manyanga, for transmission up-river. On the whole they are fairly industrious.

'Occasionally I come across one who knows how to talk to the Bazombo and Bakongo traders; then we can have a nice chat; generally we can talk a little. They inspect my hair, so different from theirs, hold my hand to feel if it is as warm with life as theirs, pull back my sleeve a little (to wonder at the skin, whiter even than my sunburnt hands), chatting, laughing, but not a bit afraid. I like the Banyanzi. Their children, bright and merry, are always glad to see me. If I want to join a group,

immediately a little fellow will run and fetch a country stool. One dear little girl, Munjeke (The Laughter), about seven years old, comes to see us often. Curious, but dignified, timid but trustful, she likes to look at pictures, and the many strange things we can show her. She is a special favourite with us. But we have many little friends, Bateke and Bawambu as well. I don't think it too sanguine to hope for a day school of fifty to a hundred children. One of Nga Liema's wives asked me the other day why white ladies did not come to teach them—don't we care for women too?'

As to this question, the missionaries all agreed that unless some ladies were willing to cast in their lot with them the Mission would be a very lop-sided affair. Indeed, it might be a failure. But they were sanguine that, in due time, sufficient ladies would join them, some as wives, and later on some as independent workers; and that thus they would be able to teach and train girls to be fit partners for the boys in whom they were seeking to inculcate higher ideals of home life and personal morality than had hitherto prevailed. Writing to a friend on the subject, Dr. Bentley says:—

'Even the Roman Catholics recognise the urgent need of women in the Mission field, and the Mission at Lundana is already preparing for three or four "sisters." A Bachelor Mission in Africa, indeed, I should think in any country, as an established thing, would be as disgraceful a blunder as was ever perpetrated. The stronghold of the terrible superstition in this country lies in the women, with whom we men cannot have much to do. I should like to see some girls trained to become fit and worthy wives for such boys as Nlemvo—and who is to do it? We men cannot do it. It would be impossible for us to preserve a chaste character in the eyes of the natives, if we received girls on to our station. In writing this I assume that Mission work is to be carried on in an earnest, thorough, practical manner, and that not to men only shall be given the honour and privilege of such a vocation as ours. The natives are always asking why we do not bring white ladies. And why not, indeed? Without ladies Missions would be a folly, for we cannot do anything with the women; —— urges me that I go home and get married.'

Writing to a friend about the latter suggestion, he says: 'If wisely chosen with regard to health

and other fitness, ladies will be a great blessing to our Mission. But I do not want a wife who will hinder me; missionaries' wives should be first missionary then wife, even as missionaries should be first missionaries and then husbands. One thing I shall seek to remember constantly, that if marriage is to hinder my usefulness, I had better not marry, and if I am able to find a lady who would be willing to accompany me back, she must know that I am first a missionary and secondly her husband. In fact, just as the wife of a military officer cannot count on having her husband always with her, so my wife must not expect me always by her side. There are ladies willing to come out in single blessedness. There may be one who would do the same only as my wife. You will understand me, I think, that I mean nothing cold or callous, but that I wish my service to the Mission to be unaffected by any change I might wish to make personally. Missionary work should be the whole life's work, and all private interests yield to it. . . . A missionary's wife who has the missionary spirit, and enjoys good health, may do as much and more than her husband, but without those qualifications no one ought to come. In my own case I should wish that my wife, if I bring one, be accepted as

a lady of the Society, and that she be of that earnest kind, that she would prefer, in case of my death, to remain out still as a missionary. . . . But "It is all uncertain in this dark stage, and almost impossible to forecast."'

Chapter X

First Furlough, and Many Labours

'Make thou His service thy delight,
He'll make thy wants His care.'

BUT five years of such toil, and the three latter with so much hard marching crowded into them, rendered it absolutely imperative that Mr. Bentley should have rest. Accordingly, in the Spring of 1884, he left the Congo on furlough, taking with him Nlemvo, with whose help he hoped, during this time of rest, to pass through the press a Dictionary and Grammar of the Congo language. They sailed in the Portuguese mail steamer, and landed at Lisbon, from whence they travelled homewards overland, arriving in London in the middle of April, just in time to be present at the Spring Meetings of the various Baptist Societies. He spoke at the great Missionary meeting of Thursday evening in Exeter Hall; at a Birmingham meeting on the Friday morning, and at the Young People's meeting in London on the same evening. With the

Exeter Hall speech some who looked for stirring oratory were disappointed, but those who wished to gain information were more than satisfied. It was full of matter; it was concise and to the point, whilst the frank sincerity and buoyancy of his tone made Mr. Bentley widely sought for as a missionary deputation.

Beside public speaking he had, of course, to accede to the request of many interviewers, and was more than once asked to write letters of explanation and advice to friends who were in doubt as regards certain aspects of the policy of the Mission.

He was especially delighted to have been able to persuade Mr. Arthington to encourage the Committee to active forward policy. His influence resulted in Mr. Arthington's letter to the Committee, offering £2,000 for the purpose, which led the Committee to pass a proposal 'to place ten stations at about one hundred miles apart, along the river, between Stanley Pool and Stanley Falls, and this is to be covered as soon, and as fast, as suitable men offer.'

In one of his letters to a friend we have his views as to the type of men to be sent out :—

'We cannot look to our theological colleges for all; they are quite inadequate. My own feeling is

rather in favour of good earnest, practical laymen —men who figure as first-rate Sunday-school men, who present high qualities—fellows who know how to win hearts. You will readily understand the type—a combination of energy and tact. It occurs to me that you will know many such men, and in looking about seeking advice and help I am writing to you among the first, to ask you to favour me with information as to any whom you know of, who might help us. I wonder whether the claims to Mission service abroad have ever been brought before you. I know you would obey the call of duty in this also, did you recognise it as such.'

But like many another missionary on furlough, the ceaseless demands of deputation work told upon Mr. Bentley. To a friend he wrote that he felt very 'weary of this endless drive,' adding: 'If it lasts much longer I shall smash up; I have been so incessantly busy and anxious lately, with no rest at all, that I am really worse for the change to England, and two days ago went down with fever. I am better now, but still feeling out of sorts.'

Naturally of a retiring character, Mr. Bentley found no great pleasure in all this publicity; but political changes were impending on the Congo, and he felt that it was his duty, so

far as lay in his power, to keep the land so dear to his heart from falling into the hands of the Portuguese. They had long claimed the country, and done little or nothing for it. The future of the Congo was much discussed in other than missionary circles. Newspapers—such as the *Daily News* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*—sought articles from Mr. Bentley; he was also in correspondence with the Negro Aid and Anti-Slavery Societies, so that instead of progressing fast with his literary work, he was kept politically busy. But he felt that Providence had timed his arrival, and that to hold back any information which he could give would be a serious wrong to the country he was seeking to uplift. Meantime every free moment at home was given to language work with Nlemvo.

Before long the pressure threatened serious issues. To a friend Mr. Bentley wrote: 'I am doing my very best to help things on; have seen and talked with many. All this has taken up much time. I am always in a state of semi-collapse. I do not know what you fellows will think about so long a stay, but there is such a world of work. I cannot help it. I must attend to things as they come, or else worse trouble will come. But whether you are vexed with me or

not, I am "niggering" beyond my strength, with all the terrible burden of this Dictionary and Grammar. If I could give my undivided attention to it, I should soon get it ready for the printers, but if I did that other things would "hang fire" at home. We should get no help, and the extension scheme would be postponed. I do not suppose you ever did such a wicked thing as to fall asleep on your knees, but others have. This high pressure is ruination to body, spirit, work, and everything. I have never felt so miserably down in my life.'

To another he writes: 'Do not be impatient with me. I am doing the best I can, at the cost of myself. I am pegging away. For various reasons I found it impossible to bury myself in the country as I had hoped. Mothers have their feelings and I must stay at home, although my nearness to the Mission House renders me liable for reference for everything. You know how I was hindered at the first over the interviews necessary to the Ten Stations Scheme, Congo Treaty, and first unavoidable speeches. I have not studied my own convenience or pleasure. The Dictionary has grown beyond anything I had ever expected, and the labour of getting it ready was also heavier and slower than I expected. However,

now there is nothing left of the first part but straightforward copying. I am much disappointed at this enforced long stay. If it were translation, indeed I would not stay to finish it here; but there is no dodging this. It is no holiday to be at home under such circumstances. Every possible moment, all possible thought and energy, must go in this one direction, and I am all the worse for it in health. I have suffered from sleeplessness lately. I must not go more into these details than to assure you that I have done, and am doing, my level best to get out. But what is done must be well and thoroughly done, at any cost. In so doing I feel that I am best studying the interests of our Mission. To scamp the work to save a month would be worse than foolish. It is really the greatest piece of self-denial I have yet been called upon to make.'

In a letter to another colleague a different subject crops up: 'There is to be a Conference at Berlin on the 15th. We must give the Free State all the support possible. It may have faults and weak points, but it is surely better than any practicable alternative hitherto suggested.'

When the delegates to the Conference did meet at Berlin, Mr. Bentley was sent there to

be at hand for reference should he be needed; but he was not called for.

All this time private matters had had to be put aside; he had absolutely no time for these. Eight months had come and passed, and as the previous extract shows he was already contemplating his return, and as yet God had not given him any prospect of being able to take back a companion with him. Though he was anxious, if possible, not to return to the Congo unmarried, he was beginning to fear that he might, after all, have to do so.

But God had not forgotten him. What better place, what more suitable time, for the man who had wished that his wife, if God should give him one, should be of a missionary spirit, to be introduced to his future wife than the Mission House, and after the New Year's Prayer Meeting? It was but a handshake in passing, and neither of the two thought any more about it. But when, in the following February, they again met at the house of a friend, and Mr. Bentley was told that the lady next to whom he had been sitting had offered herself for Mission work in China—but was expecting to be refused, as the missionaries out there considered that the time was not ripe for sending out unmarried ladies to China—the thought flashed across his mind

that possibly she might be the one whom God had prepared for him. At any rate here was one who would answer to his idea that a missionary's wife should be 'first a missionary, then a wife,' and he immediately made up his mind to seek a nearer acquaintance.

At his first visit Mission work only was discussed, but such was the harmony of ideas and desires, that Mr. Bentley, having in the meantime assured himself that the medical examination had proved satisfactory with regard to China, soon felt drawn to ask the lady to accompany him to the Congo as his wife.

The course of love did not run quite smooth at first. The Congo had a bad name, and friends opposed. Between December, 1884, and May, 1885, five deaths had been reported from the Congo, and Mr. Crudgington had been obliged to relinquish work there on account of his wife's illness. One or two ladies of the other Missions were ill, and reports were being circulated that the climate was not one for ladies. The Committee were very reluctant to agree to sending more out. Mr. Bentley was, of course, much worried by this.

On the other side it was felt a risky thing to do to bind oneself to one who had hitherto been a perfect stranger, and whom one had only seen

about three or four times, twice of these being on the platform as a speaker. But there were two thoughts that could not be reasoned away. The first was the warning of a China missionary not to withdraw from God's service through the disappointment of not being sent to China. If the 'call' to work had been from Him, He would open 'another door.' Strange! Had not I myself said when offering for Mission work, and asked where I should like to be sent, that it was not for the servant to say where she would go, and what work she would do; it was for the mistress to appoint? Was this call to Congo from the Master? The second was a sermon on the words, 'Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it' (Matt. xvi. 25). Of the sermon nothing was remembered, but the text had been a message. After that there was no more hesitation, and though at our next interview Holman warned me that the Mission was his first love, and that his wife must be willing that it should have the first consideration, we both felt that our Heavenly Father had guided us to this point, and together we knelt down to ask His blessing upon our plans for work together for Him.

How some of Mr. Bentley's friends received

the news may be gathered from the following letter from Mr. T. J. Comber :—

'My dear old Holman,—Hearing that W.'s wedding-day was to have been yesterday, reminds me that probably yours cannot be far distant, and as I should not like the event to transpire without your having a line or two from your old colleague, I will write at once.

'You know well, dear old fellow, what esteem and love I feel for you. We have had so much to bind us closely together in our past work. I suppose we two have been thrown more together, and have worked more closely hand in hand, than any other two on the Congo. Our friendship is one that I think nothing can break, and I don't know any one whom I esteem more highly than I do you—and yet I have many friends, as you know.

'All that I wish you, and your dear wife, for the future you can guess—many years of happiness and usefulness in your work on the Congo. May the Lord God throw around you His special protection, and enrich you both with special blessing. I am, as you know, very thankful that you have fallen in love, and that some one has fallen in love with you, and that you now bring a wife out with you; specially thankful, you may be sure

that her heart is set not only upon Holman, but upon a share in Holman's work. The Lord bless you both abundantly.'

We spent a truly happy fortnight in Holland, in August, where I had the pleasure of introducing him to my relations and friends, and were married the last week of September. The following Monday found us at Swansea, where the Autumnal Missionary Services were being held that year, and where farewell was to be said to Mr. Bentley, together with Mr. Weeks and others on the Tuesday. The summer had been, as I have said, full of work and anxiety for Holman. The fortnight in Holland had come just in time to avert a breakdown; but it was a fagged and weary man of whom they took leave that evening; and his exposure to the cold on the night of the valedictory meeting brought some loss of sight, which increased to total blindness.

After having been away for two weeks we returned to London, where we took lodgings near my husband's parents. Our home circle then consisted of our two selves, with Nlemvo and Aku. The latter was a little girl from the Upper Congo, who had been caught by the Arabs in one of their raids. When Mr. Comber had returned to England in 1885, he had brought with him

THE BLIND LEXICOGRAPHER AT WORK.

DR. BENTLEY DICTATING TO HIS WIFE; NLEMVO PROOF-READING; AND AKU LEARNING TO SPIN.

[The wooden trays in the corner contain the slips upon which the words of the Congo dictionary were written.]

[To face page 160.

Mr. Grenfell's little daughter, and Aku had been sent with him as nurse in charge on the way. On Mr. Comber's return she came to us, and Holman hoped to see her the wife of one of his boys. She was a bright, lively child, and I became very fond of her.

Mr. Bentley, in his cheerful way, would sometimes tease Aku. One day, after the usual greeting on reassembling after absence, she remarked—

'In our country we no kiss!'

'Not kiss!' he asked; 'what do you do then?'

'Oh, nothing.'

'Don't mothers kiss their babies?'

'No.'

'Don't husbands kiss their wives?'

'No,' (with a very shocked face).

'What do they do then?'

Here she half-amusedly, half-shamefacedly threw out her right arm with a gesture that evidently meant fighting. 'We do like that,' she said.

By and by it was time to say good-night, and when Aku went to say 'Good-night' to Mr. Bentley, he gave her a quick little slap in the face. First she looked surprised at this unusual and unexpected treatment, but on divining what was meant, was at once convulsed with laughter.

'That a Congo kiss!' she cried. After that when asked which she would have, a Congo kiss or an English kiss, she would say, 'English kiss, please—English kiss better!'

The sudden failure of sight, with which Mr. Bentley had been seized, had, soon after our return to London, so seriously increased that for him to write legibly for compositors was impossible. The first part of the Dictionary was finished; indeed we had been followed by proofs wherever we went. But he had only just started the critical reading through of the words of the second section, which Mr. Harry White, a young student of Regent's Park, who was looking forward to work on the Congo, had copied out for him. It seemed a serious fix to be in; but the difficulty was met by my undertaking the duty.

At the same time Mr. Bentley did not let his blindness keep him from all work. He soon made himself a writing-pad with guide, so that he might sometimes, when I was unavoidably absent, write down parts of the grammar, and it was not long before he began taking this pad to bed with him to write down if he 'should happen to wake' up in the night. He rejoiced over the way he had managed to outwit his poor blind eyes, and was able to write now as well in the dark as in the light.

In the morning I used to wake up to find the floor by the bedside strewn with sheets of scribbling. Occasionally he would forget that he had already written on both sides of the paper, and would turn it over again. It was sometimes no easy task to decipher his hieroglyphics. One sheet I have kept as a sample. Whether it was a double turning, or that he picked up a sheet already written on by mistake, is impossible to tell. Very often some young lady friends would come in to help him ; then he would dictate to them, whilst I would be copying out his nocturnal compositions. Miss Bessie Payne was our most frequent assistant, and we both felt deeply indebted to her. Her sister would also come sometimes, and Miss Nellie Oram too. So clear was his brain, that he more than a few times kept the four of us busy at once.

For some seven or eight months we worked hard at the language in a happy, humdrum way, and Holman more than once gratefully acknowledged that if he had had to work with an ordinary paid clerk he would not have finished the work in three times the length of time that we actually took. A clerk, however efficient, would have had his regular hours to which the work would have had to yield. We

made our hours for meals, aye, and for sleep too, dependent on our work. If he was in the middle of some discussion as to the correct shade of the meaning of a word, nothing was allowed to interrupt. In the evenings we would work on again until supper, or even after, seldom closing the books before 9.30, and frequently continuing until eleven or twelve o'clock.

On one occasion, I remember, Nlemvo got very cross at having to go on past time, and would not answer properly. Eleven o'clock struck, but Holman still persisted; twelve o'clock came, we were still at it; Nlemvo grew sleepy now, as well as stubborn. But Holman was determined to find out what he wanted to know, and we sat that night until a quarter to one before I could lay down the pen.

I will explain how it came that we were obliged thus to work. When Mr. Bentley's eyes were failing, before he had quite lost the sight in both, he had shown me his methods and trained me to put the various piles of slips of paper in certain positions—the unpassed there, the finished ones there, the clean stock there, those under discussion there, and in such a way that they were always in the same position, from the leading idea to the secondary,

or more remote meanings of the word. His Bank training had given him methodical habits, and though in his Congo life he was not able to have things always his own way, in all his literary work, which was not subject to other influences, and other people's convenience, he kept to the good old habits formed at his desk at the Alliance Bank. So it came that when blind, he was able to imagine that he saw every slip of paper, and read them with his mind's eye. Sometimes on closer investigation a word would prove to be only a very remote secondary meaning, and the root idea of the Congo word altogether different; then the whole order of slips would have to be rearranged.

It will readily be understood that to a blind person, depending entirely on his memory, any interruption to his imaginary display of papers would be most upsetting, and no interruption, over which we had any control, could be allowed in the middle of any important abstract ideas. The description of objects gave no trouble; either they had names or they had not. But with such words as 'goodness,' 'purity,' 'justice,' in fact, all abstract ideas, he took the greatest care, realising that the clearness and purity of future Bible translation

work depended largely on his patience and faithfulness then.

The difficulty of the word 'holiness' will illustrate this. At San Salvador one colleague thought the word 'zimola' was the equivalent of 'holiness.' Mr. Bentley's knowledge of Portuguese enabled him to prove to the brethren that it was a mistake. 'Zimola' is derived from 'esmola'—'alms.' It is not a Congo word at all, and cannot express holiness. The word for holiness—that holiness which contains the idea of purity without defilement—the root for that lies in the adjective 'avelela.' It is used for pure water, clean plates; if there is a spot of defilement they are not 'avelela.'

Later on we found another word, 'mpwe,' which is, perhaps, still more emphatically 'spotless.' For the ceremonial purity of the Levitical Priesthood, in so far that it consisted in the avoidance of that which defiles, he found he needed another word, and that this idea would be best expressed by 'ntinti.' The man who is very careful in matters of cleanliness, who will not eat anything filthy, is 'nkwa-ntinti.' To teach them to pray to have their hearts made 'mi-esmola' would be to teach them to pray to have them made

'almslike.' We need to have our hearts made 'avelela' and then kept 'antinti.' So, too, their word for 'wisdom' was mixed up with 'generous goodness,' for the man who was wise would be careful not to raise his townsfolk's jealousy by retaining all the fruits of his trade or labour, lest he be killed as a witch. How could the word implying such calculating 'cuteness be used to explain God's love and bounty?

It was the word 'substitution' that kept us at work that night till 12.45, and it was the description of one of God's attributes, which one day caused our 1 o'clock dinner to be left until 3 p.m.

Sometimes friends would come: 'I hope I am not disturbing you, Mr. Bentley, but I could not pass your door without just looking in.' Interruptions such as these he took philosophically, and was able to enjoy the friendship that brought them about; though the break of ten minutes would often mean the loss of a whole precious hour in finding where we had left off. Some idea of the clerical work the Dictionary entailed may be formed from the fact that, had the slips on which the words were written been placed one on the top of the other, there would have been

a pile more than fifty feet high to write out, and afterwards look through and criticise, lest there should be any mistake or false translation. Sometimes the slips would be read, and passed almost as soon as read, but sometimes a single word would take hours of discussion.

But it was an enjoyable work, for, as Holman said, 'the language is a fine one, and worthy of study.' Indeed he was much puzzled as to how so degraded a people could have so rich and beautiful a language. Although the people in their discussions are very much more lengthy and roundabout than we are, their speech is decidedly crisper than ours.

We also took down words of Aku's language, which Holman hoped later on to put in a parallel column with his Congo Dictionary. These we were able to get from her at odd moments and at meal-times, and in a letter of Holman's to Mr. Baynes, written in February, 1886, he says that he has collected some three or four hundred words. In the same letter he writes of his blindness: 'It is a merciful affliction, being accompanied with no pain, and scarcely hindering me at all in my writing work, though it is a lesson in patience,' and he never relinquished his faith

that 'perfect wisdom, perfect love is working for the best.'

At last, having finished the writing of the Dictionary, it struck me that we might read our proofs as satisfactorily somewhere in the country as in our small, stuffy lodgings in London; and as French is the official language in Congo, I suggested going over to France. Accordingly we deposited Aku with Holman's parents, taking Nlemvo with us for the work's sake. We spent a very refreshing month in Normandy, working assiduously at the Grammar in the mornings, and taking our proofs into the lovely garden in the afternoons and evenings. A few times our hostess prevailed upon him to drive with her to the château of a friend, or to accompany her to some lovely spot in the neighbourhood. He also thoroughly enjoyed spending some hours with the *curé* of the village, an intelligent, well-read man. Of course the opportunity was too good to be lost, and Holman got all the information he could out of him as to various matters of the internal government of the Roman Catholic order, the way in which the number of Masses to be said for the dead would be distributed amongst the less busy country priests, &c.

It was always a real pleasure to Holman to

spend time with any one who could give him information. 'I like getting the pick of their brains,' he would say; 'I always get some useful information in that way, and generally find out something I did not know before.'

Chapter XI

To the Field Once More

'. . . Of hopeful spirit, undamped
By worldly-mindedness, or anxious care,
Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refreshed
By knowledge gathered up from day to day.'
WORDSWORTH.

HAD it not been for the news of the burning of the Arthington station in June that year we should have been ready to return rather earlier to the Congo. However, the delay was all the better for the printing in hand. Although the Grammar was not quite finished on our return from Normandy, we immediately commenced our arrangements for Congo ; and a hard fortnight of rushing about we had, buying things to replace the burnt stock, and packing them at the Mission House.

It was a good plan for us to pack at the Mission House, as it would have meant no end of upset and worry to his parents in their limited quarters. During those days we were so busy that dinner was quite a secondary matter. Sometimes we had it at one o'clock ; sometimes

at three or four. Three days, my diary tells me, we had no dinner at all, and just rushed into a shop on the way home in the afternoon to get a bun, which we ate in the train to stave off hunger.

A friend in England, on hearing of Mr. Bentley's loss by fire, kindly offered to restore some of the things. It was just like him to accept this kind offer in the following disinterested way: 'Might I make a suggestion? When State officials and Continental gentlemen have visited me, I have often wished I had some book to lend them. I was thinking of this before I left home, but did not know what books to get. It was a difficult question. Not knowing where to turn for advice, I wrote to M. de Lavelaye, of Liège; he wrote to his friend, E. de Pressensé, of Paris, who sent me a list. It has occurred to me that it would be more agreeable to you to assist in such a matter than in anything absolutely personal. My idea as to the books is that I may be able to lend them to the foreigners we meet out there, hoping that either by their own matter, or conversation suggested by them, good may be done. It is so very difficult to touch on religious matters with the traders and State folk. If there is anything that would help in this I shall be glad to avail myself of it.'

The loss of his goods by fire during his absence in England, which brought about this suggestion, made Holman anxious to reassure the missionaries on the spot as to his own personal feelings in the matter, lest he should in any way be misunderstood. For this purpose he wrote in the following terms to one of his colleagues: 'I do not know yet to what extent my loss will fall upon me. I am comforting myself with the thought that I am the only man who suffers, as I believe that Mr. Grenfell's belongings, and those of our other brethren at the Pool, will have been safely conveyed to Nshasha. My own and up-country stores will, doubtless, have been very wisely left at Ntamo until we should know where they would finally have to be sent to. But whether the disaster occurred at Nshasha (whither my things had been sent on) or at Ntamo (whence they had not yet been removed), I know that you have only done what has been wisest and best.'

Shortly before the time for our departure for the Congo a friend invited us to Malvern for a short visit, with 'freedom to read proofs all day' (if we wished). The invitation was very gladly accepted, and we went.

Just before reaching Oxford the train stopped.

By and by we heard that a lady, who was in the next carriage, had fallen out on the line. Some consultation with the station-master followed, and Holman offered to return with a little engine to pick up the lady, and render any assistance that was needed.

I remember being much puzzled, and asking him how it was that he was selected to go out of all the crowd. 'Only because I just happened to be there.' This was so like him. I well remember how pleased he was at generally 'just happening to be there' when there was a more than usually serious surgical case. He obtained a good deal of experience and instruction that way. Still I believe that his being 'just there' was not so much the fortunes of war as his constant readiness to be of use.

But Mr. Bentley's Congo life had prepared him for emergencies, even when they entailed surgery.

One day, before I had ever been out to Congo—before, indeed, he knew that I had become acquainted with Holman—Mr. Comber, in speaking of Mr. Bentley's medical work, said: 'If I were ill now, I would rather be treated by Holman than by anybody; he knows what he is about, and is most careful and practical.' One of his earliest experiments of

sewing up wounds was made on himself. He was making a parrot cage on board ship, when the knife slipped, and cut a deep gash of rather over an inch. He writes of this: 'I had never sewn up a wound yet, so experimented on myself. As to surgery, it is more dreadful in anticipation than in fact. The cut was done before I knew it, and gave no pain; the sewing up was a fancy. I should not shrink from a seam a foot long. Now I shall know how to perform on others.'

On one occasion, at a certain station, a child's eye had to be extracted. The task was a delicate and difficult one for any person without a proper training in surgery; but Mr. Bentley performed the operation most successfully. Many and varied, however, were the occasions upon which his skill was called into play by the circumstances of missionary life in such a field; indeed, there was hardly a part of the body that he had not operated upon, though hands crushed through gunshot wounds were his most frequent cases.

Formerly there were a great many cases of smallpox in the country. After a visit to England, Mr. Bentley took back with him some lymph, vaccinated a number of people, and asked the other missionaries to do the same.

After a while thousands of people were vaccinated; since then the smallpox in the country has been much less, and consequently many lives have been saved. Nlemvo reminds me that the now widely known sleeping-sickness also set Mr. Bentley's zeal at work. He tried to find out what caused the sickness. For this purpose he asked the patients to explain what they felt when they knew they had the sleeping-sickness; what sort of food they ate; what sort of beds they slept on; and what the first symptoms were. The people would explain, while he listened and took notes, hoping to make the information useful to inquirers at home.

All this by the way. I must return to our Malvern visit. We spent a pleasant week there, working hard every morning, and enjoying drives with our friend in the afternoon. I am sure we benefited by our little outing.

The night before sailing there was a Valedictory Service at the Down's Chapel, arranged to begin at seven o'clock. We could not get clear of the Mission House until six o'clock that evening. We then rushed home, had a basin of bread and milk (all the food we had had that day), which the servant prepared while

we were getting into more suitable garments, and reached the Chapel just in time for the meeting. There were four other missionaries to join in the farewell, new colleagues who were going out for the first time—the Revs. R. D. Darby, R. H. C. Graham, H. R. Phillips, and H. Shindler.

We sailed from Tilbury Docks for Lisbon, arriving there on Thursday, September 3rd. Mr. Bentley's knowledge of Portuguese stood us in good stead. Arrangements for transhipping were made at once, and we were soon installed in our new steamer, the 'S. Thomé.' Although there was very little time in Lisbon, we managed to go to the Jardin Alcantara to get a fine view of the city; and visited the Placa de Dom Pedro and the near churches. There is also an interesting tram ride to Belem, where there is an old church well worth seeing, and some of our fellow-travellers went there.

But Mr. Bentley had something much more important on his mind. He had heard that there still existed in a Lisbon museum an old manuscript copy of a Catechism, written by the priests who lived in Congo three or four hundred years ago. He therefore sought out the only Protestant (Presbyterian) Minister of the place, and before we left he had obtained a promise

from him to search for the Catechism and send him a copy. Later on, when it reached us in Congo, Holman was delighted to find that it was in the same dialect as that he had reduced, and that many of the words used for abstract ideas by them were the same that he had found. The changes were very slight. There was not so much difference between the Congo of three hundred years ago and that of to-day as there is between the language used by Chaucer and our present-day poets. This is very remarkable, bearing in mind that there were no books at all nor any who could read or write in the country. The chief differences existed in the mode of spelling; for instance, the priests had used 'qu' where we had put 'kw.'

We were much more comfortable on our new steamer, although the Portuguese cooking was not appreciated by those of the party who had never been out of England.

At Banana we found a small river steamer waiting to take passengers up to Boma. Next morning, on transhipping, we found the accommodation so poor (no seats being provided) that the missionaries asked whether there would be time to return to the big steamer and fetch their deck-chairs, to which the captain agreed. Whilst they were gone, the Governor, who was also going up

to Boma, arrived on board; and, although he could see that the boat, in which Mr. Bentley and Mr. Graham were, had already pushed off from the steamer and was making towards us, he would not wait for them, but ordered the captain to start. I told the captain that the two had not returned yet, and asked him to wait. He was quite willing to do so, but referred me to the Governor. I went to him then and begged him to wait, it would hardly have taken more than ten minutes from where they were then to the little steamer, but the Governor's reply was, 'If Mr. Bentley wanted to go with the steamer he ought to have been on board.' There was no help for it; the captain had to give the signal for starting. M. le Gouvernour had spoken![1]

At Boma we were met by Mr. Darling, who took us to the Dutch House Factory. In those early days there were no hotels, where one could expect to be accommodated in return for exact payment, but no white man was ever shut out who asked for hospitality. Each gave what he could, or felt inclined to, knowing that at any turn of the wheel, favours might be needed. However, at Boma the hospitality given was most liberal and kind.

There was no further hitch about getting to

[1] This was not Governor Wahis, who was ever most courteous.

Underhill—a lovely spot; but what a climb up to the house, and, oh, the heat of the house! I did not relish the supper—all tinned food, plenty, but not appetising. It was Sunday when we arrived at Underhill. In the afternoon we had a communion service together with some of the American Baptist Missionary Union friends, who had come out on the steamer with us. Finding that there were not carriers enough to take us all to our various destinations, it was arranged that Mr. Darby should accompany us to the Pool, leaving Mr. Shindler to wait for more carriers. As two were wanted for San Salvador, the inseparable friends, Messrs. Graham and Phillips, were designated for that station.

We arrived at Wathen on the eleventh day at noon, and it was a pleasant sight to see all the station boys in white jumpers running down the hill to meet us. The day after we arrived, Mr. Percy Comber started off to the Pool to fetch down Mr. Davies who had had a bad fever there, and we stayed to help Mr. Comber during his brother's absence. This was so planned that Holman and he could have some talks together.

An early domestic incident gave us some amusement. Mr. Comber asked me to be good enough to look after the *ménage*—'he did not like doing it when there were ladies about.' He

took me to the food store, and showed me what there was. It was a poor stock, and contained no milk and no flour; so that the position was sufficiently perplexing for one utterly unacquainted with the resources of the country! One day Holman was not pleased with what I had provided. 'We had not had a nice pudding for ever so long; couldn't I concoct something?' By way of example he and Mr. Percy Comber put their heads together that afternoon, and we were treated to a pudding made of tapioca baked in treacle water. We appreciated the fun, but not the pudding. They did not offer to supplant me again.

We stayed three weeks at Wathen, after which we proceeded to the Pool, arriving there on November 4th. About a fortnight or three weeks later we went up the Kwangu in the 'Peace.' It was a very pleasant journey, and gave Mr. Bentley the opportunity for long talks with Mr. Grenfell about the work. There were various reasons for exploring the Kwangu. It was hoped that it would be found that this waterway would be in such a direction as to bring us into near proximity with San Salvador, which would give us a new hitherto untapped region for the procuring of carriers for the transport between Stanley Pool and the coast.

Christmas Day was spent by us just on the side of the Kingunzi Rapids. The next day was Sunday. We spent that on the beach near the town. The people were very friendly, and came out in one or two big canoes to inspect us. We had our travelling harmonium on board, and I played and sang some Congo hymns, with which they were very pleased. Mr. Bentley explained that we had come to the country to teach them about their 'unknown God.' They signified their approval of this, and hoped that we should soon visit them again.

At the entrance to the Kwangu we had had some difficulty in communicating with the people; but as we got further up the river we were able to use the San Salvador dialect. Here was further justification of the decision of the four pioneer brethren to adopt the language of the old capital; for here, right away at Kingunzi, in the interior, a month's journey from Stanley Pool, Holman had no difficulty at all in making himself understood.

Altogether we were six weeks on that journey, reaching Stanley Pool again on the 3rd or 4th of January, the down journey taking us very much less time than the up, when we stopped at every place. As for river scenery,

the Kwangu goes beyond everything. The Rhine did not seem to me half so beautiful when I was on it.

As to the *raison d'être* of these early journeys up-river, I cannot explain it better than Mr. Bentley himself does in a very appreciative letter regarding Mr. Grenfell's journey :—

'In preparing our plans for the Upper River, our first duty was to inform ourselves as to the positions affording the greatest strategic advantages, the distribution and character of the populations, the physical features of the country, and the extent, navigability, and course of the great affluents of the river. To have made our plans without this knowledge would have been the wildest, wickedest folly. Mr. Grenfell applied himself to the task of investigation with that admirable energy, skill, and thoroughness which have been so highly appreciated. It has pained us to learn that our purpose in these investigations has, in some quarters, been misunderstood. It may be exciting, but it is certainly far from pleasant to be a target for poisoned arrows, or to run the frequent risk of being speared, and perhaps eaten by wild cannibals. The accounts may be thrilling, but whatever aspect such work may present to those who think the matter over beside their

comfortable fireside at home, certainly those of us who have been obliged to do pioneering, almost *ad nauseam*, would infinitely prefer quiet mission work on our stations to the privations and exposure which must inevitably attend all such journeys into the unknown interior. . . .

'Mr. Grenfell has repressed these feelings, and has performed the duties which fell to him in a masterly manner, and records his information in so interesting a style that some of our friends, who read the account, regard it as a charming excursion only. Shall we blame Mr. Grenfell for not grumbling at weariness, privation, dangers, and inconvenience; or because he abstains from making stock of the risk to child and wife, whose presence seems to have done more than anything to make the journey a success? Shall we not rather admire the dauntless courage and self-abnegation which enabled him to perform his task with such good grace?'

On our return to Stanley Pool, Mr. and Mrs. Grenfell immediately started for Europe, leaving Mr. Bentley in charge of the station whilst Mr. Whitley and Mr. Charters went with the 'Peace' to take Mr. Darby to Lukolele. No sooner had we fairly settled down than Mr. Bentley threw himself again into the work, and for the next three or six weeks all was fairly

straightforward. In my own diary I find the following :—

Sunday, 16th.—'After breakfast Holman showed the boys how to lash two canoes together. He thought of taking them all into the town with him, to have the Sunday service there. Miss Spearing and the girls went too. After arranging a few small home duties, I had the coast folk, who understand more or less English, to have a little service with them.'

That afternoon a caravan arrived. Although we did not like their arriving on Sunday, we were thankful indeed to have a supply of provisions, for the fire previously mentioned had quite destroyed our food stores, and we were short of almost everything. For a time, indeed, the situation was very trying, for we were in great straits for food. Fortunately Mr. Whitley had got most of the steamer hands away, so that there were only a small number on the station, but even then we were not able to get sufficient 'kwanga,' except by sending over to Mfwa, the other side of the Pool. We also kept a man doing nothing but buying up kwanga in the hills, amongst the Bawumbu. In this way we managed to keep our station orphans from starving, but it was a very anxious time.

This started us thinking whether we could not

raise fowls for the table; and Holman ingeniously made me an incubator, which was very successful, as after results proved. The only trouble was, it would take two hundred eggs, and we could seldom buy more than four or five at a time. But these were wanted for the table, and sometimes had, we found, been taken from under a sitting hen.

Though the difficulty of the language often obliged me to go and ask Mr. Bentley to translate for me, my housekeeping duties were very simple on days that things ran smoothly, and I was able, therefore, to continue helping Mr. Bentley with his proof-reading.

We had finished the actual Dictionary in England, but we were now busy with the Grammar, which we had not been able to complete before sailing. Often we were up till eleven and twelve at night reading over his manuscript; for the evening time, after the station was asleep, was our best chance of uninterrupted work. Writing to a friend about the Grammar, he says: 'Every day as I worked at the Grammar I found that my task was growing bigger. I was hoping to have been able to report that all was in print, but grammatical points have caused much delay. It is no good shirking difficulties, and the

result of the past care and constancy has been so very remunerative, that the Grammar will be simple in the extreme. But the work needs very close attention.'

Stanley Pool was a dreadful place for mosquitoes. They were so troublesome that in the evenings we could get no peace. However, Holman was not the man to be put out by any hindrances that could be conquered. He soon made a framework all round his table; I made a mosquito net to fit all round it; after which we were able to work better.

On February 24th our little son was born, and at last, on April 28th, the Grammar was finished.

On May 13th, Mr. Bentley writes to his father and mother: 'At last I am free from the terrible burden of the Grammar. All is written and copied. So hard have I worked, scarcely ever going to bed as long as I could do any more.'

At home there were some who had been surprised at the length of time the work had taken; and overlooking the fact that he had had other duties beside his literary work to attend to, and, forgetting his blindness, had spoken in a way that had hurt his parents' feelings. Referring to these, he writes: 'I am pained

indeed to know that you spent sleepless nights over it. I gave the widest margin in calculating at the outset the length of time it would take me. It would have been foolish ambition to have dreamt of tracing out, and discovering, as much as I eventually did. I worked my hardest; had I put harder work into it still, you would have grieved on other lines. I do not write this in vexation, but to urge you not to worry whatever the people say. Instead of feeling ashamed and disgraced at the slowness of the work, I think, later on, you will feel thankful that I have done the work to the best of my ability. I have done my best; you surely would not have me do otherwise?' . . .

To a friend he wrote: 'What a relief it is now that both [the Dictionary and the Grammar] are done! The strain has been very great; but grace and strength have been given, and there has been no collapse. I feel the reaction a bit. I am very weary and want a rest and change; I have had no holiday yet since joining the Mission eight years ago,[1] and I am quite looking forward to the return of the 'Peace,' for then we start on a missionary cruise. That will have its responsibilities,

[1] Even during his fortnight in Holland we had daily read proofs together.

anxieties, and dangers, but it will be a relief from the mental strain which has been so prolonged—the ever toiling and turning things over, like an endless game of chess. We are looking forward to visiting all the important towns and places where we are likely to settle, so that we may get to know the people better, and they us. In the first journeys of Mr. Grenfell this was impossible. We must now see what can be done in this way. I am deeply anxious to get among these up-river folk, among whom my lifework will lie.'

The next letter shows how he avoided the reaction of the freedom from the long strain of all these years: 'After finishing my Dictionary and Grammar work I felt out of sorts, so on June 4th I started on a country tour south and east of Stanley Pool, leaving Margo with baby and the station in charge of Mr. Biggs. The first town visited was Lemba, where resides Mokoko, one of the most important Chiefs of the neighbourhood, who did not present a very imposing appearance. For the last half-hour I had been feeling very unwell, my eyes burning, and a slight headache, warning me of fever. I almost hesitate to mention this, as you hear so much of fevers on the Congo, but only three or four times can I recall a fever when

travelling; I had all necessary medicines to hand. I lay down for an hour in a house lent to me, but the people wanted to see me, and grumbled at my seclusion. Although I felt very unwell I got up, and walked round the town with the Chief's son, and some other lads. It is large for an African town, and is composed of a number of clusters of houses separated by a few yards of jungle. The Chief's enclosure consists of twelve or more houses, round a secluded court. He used to have fifteen wives; three are dead, but he is seriously thinking of bringing up the establishment to the original number. Each of the wives has her own hut. The town is composed of such clusters ranging from four to eight houses each. Some were glad to see me, but some conservative souls thought the advent of white men an unmitigated evil. I was now in a fairly high fever, and glad to get into the house and lie down again.

'Very soon after I lay down the Chief came in to see me, bringing a calabash of palm wine, and a lot of friends and retainers. They filled the house. I declined to drink, but they had come with such good intent that I would not ask them to go. They honoured me in what is considered a most proper style. Had I cleared

them out they would have considered me proud and ungracious, and much harm would have been done.

'Mokoko sat next to my bed, occasionally he felt my hot hand to see if the "fire in my body" was lessened. There was no arranging any services. The people had never heard of such a thing as massing themselves together to listen to God's palaver. I did not even try. Instead I tried to find opportunities to talk, and five or six times during the day I talked to Mokoko, and those who were about. I was thus able to give him an idea of our errand and the good message we brought. They really talk Kiteke here, but Mokoko had visited San Salvador and stayed with the King a long time, and could speak broken Congo.

'Our Muteke guide and interpreter was very anxious for me to visit Nga Nkari, the great Chief of the Bamfumu, whose town would not be more than two good days' walk from Lemba. The road was very dangerous but the reception ceremonious. We were in a country where no white man had ever been, so everything about him was wonderful; matches, a candle, a fire that burnt and burnt without fuel.

'"What are they made of?"

'"Palm oil."

'They look at each other, as much as to say, "He does not like to tell us, so he says it is palm oil. Palm oil is yellow; this is white; we know it cannot be that. Perhaps it is human fat! Who knows what these terrible white men do!"

'Indeed, we are believed by many folk to be cannibals.

'Next day I walked about the town, but could not talk to the people nor they understand me. I tried several times to make them understand something about our message through our interpreter, but the uninterested look showed how little was understood.

'In the afternoon Nga Nkari and two of his wives paid me a visit. Poor man! he has a difficult game to play, great Chief though he be, with all his parasites, and strong friends with whom it was necessary to keep on good terms; good as friends, bad as enemies. I like him.

'From his town I returned home *viâ* Kimpoko, the station of the American Episcopal Mission. The journey has been very interesting. It has given us valuable information as to populations, languages, tribes; above all, friendships have been made. A good knowledge of the country is gained, and we can start making our plans for working it. There are plenty of towns within easy distance of Lemba and of Arthington

station with as large a population as at any of our stations, and within easy reach. It will be a fine field for work. Great opportunities for itineration, and wide and constant sowing of the seed. But for this a permanent and efficient staff will be needed.'

To his father he wrote on personal and domestic topics: 'I must not forget that your birthday is near at hand. I shall not be able to greet you on that day, nor taste the wondrous cherry pie, but may you enjoy it nevertheless. Many happy returns, dear father, of the day, and as year by year you grow riper for heaven, may the years be brighter and better than any before. If you feel that the limbs are a bit stiffer and weaker than once, may the strength and vigour of the inner man more than make up for the weakening of the tabernacle. Take care of yourself, and we will look forward to the time when I come home again without a Dicty to worry me. This year finds you a grandfather with a vengeance. At last you have a daughter in Dora, and if we have not improved on that, we have at least done well in presenting you with a little grandson. Our little Henry is getting on famously. Margo pronounces him to be a wonderful boy, not so much in adipose tissue, but intellectually; and I think she must be

right. He is evidently of a calculating turn, for he spends much of his time counting the rafters of the house. He is very healthy, a bonny little man with a good head. He smiles nicely and sometimes laughs outright, though what strikes him as humorous I really don't know. However, we are great friends. It is one thing to receive a baby into the world, and quite another to know what to do with him. When Margo comes home for her change, she will of course take the little man with her, but whether she should bring him back until I come home I really don't know. There is plenty of time to think about it, still I like to look ahead.'

Another letter gave further details of the work :—

'We have made a new departure in our school work. Before and since the Kwangu trip I have visited the town every Sunday at least, and lately Miss Spearing has accompanied me with all the children. We paddle up, I steer, and so a most homely family party we make. Our object, a visit to the old Chief, not the white traders. I am beginning to pick up my old Kiteke, and add a little more to it. Kiteke, however, is immensely difficult. I could learn three straightforward languages like Congo, Kibangi, or Kiboko, before I could get a grip on Kiteke. Dr.

Sims, however, has been at it for some years, and has mastered most of the difficulties.

'We promised to open school in the town as soon as I had finished with Nlemvo. Accordingly, to-day we fulfilled our promise and commenced. A procession through the town with two big bells brought twenty-seven children. Others joined later. We took three house-boys and ten girls with us. School is held in the old Chief's Lumbu, with many interested spectators—a most encouraging start; so, busy or not, we now go to the town every day. Miss S. and I enjoy the fifteen minutes' paddle up in our two-lashed canoes, 'Castor' and 'Pollux,' but which is 'Castor' and which 'Pollux' I do not know. This brings us into close touch with the people, who certainly like our style. On Sunday we talk where we can, and generally manage to find opportunities. When we can arrange a satisfactory interpreter, we must have regular service.'

Our next hindrance was the Emin Pasha Expedition, which brought Mr. Stanley and his people up to our part. Food was already scarce; it now became almost impossible to get anything. We were indeed thankful when they started up-river. Of this Mr. Bentley wrote:—

'The "Peace" is away up-river. Mr. Stanley

arrived with his great Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, some seven hundred men. He had with him food for three days only, and remained for about ten or twelve days. We have been very anxious about it, and made food a matter of special prayer. The European establishments had for some time already scarcely had enough food for their people. Every one was in difficulty; we knew we should experience the same. Our prayers were answered; we had sufficient from day to day, though others were on very short rations.'

The following letter to a friend refers to the food difficulty. It also illustrates Mr. Bentley's readiness to help others :—

'The French Government have much appreciated our help to Lepore, and have shown their gratitude by helping us in food matters; at inconvenience to themselves, they have shown us cordiality and politeness. We have written to them offering to take any mails up-river with us. We must do what we can to get on good terms with the French Government for the sake of our work on the Mobangi. I want to visit their posts when I am up-river. Courteousness and a little kindly help in small matters are appreciated by others, and cause us little or no trouble. We are having much trouble in the way of food. Have

not killed a goat for a long time. Dried fish and occasionally a small chicken is the style of thing we have to be content with. We get only just enough for each day's needs.

'We have made the acquaintance of Tippu Tib. He is never going to do anything naughty any more. He says he is getting old, and if a man does not become religious at forty he never will, and so he is making up for unsaid prayers, and goes to teach peace and mercy to other slavers. *Nous verrons!*

'When Mr. Stanley arrived the "Peace" happened to be in dock, and we had to find food for her crew, as well as our station folk, more than fifty people altogether. Mr. Stanley had asked the assistance of the "Peace" for the transport of some of his people. We anticipated the difficulty, and rather than have such a crowd of hungry people about us, or even part of them, we undertook to help. Had we not done so with good grace, he would have taken her by force. This is no suspicion; we know it. He went himself in the "Peace." They have been gone now about fifty-five days, and we begin to look anxiously for her return. Such expeditions are a great nuisance at the time, but it will open up a new region, which is the first step towards the letting in of the light, and the establishment of the Kingdom

of Christ, so we must look at the bright as well as the dark side.

'As to the expedition, the humanitarian aspect does not take me much. I believe it is more for the relief of Emin Pasha's ivory, or possibly there is some other reason at the back of which we know nothing, for it is absurd to think that a man possessed of so much ivory as he has cannot get away if that were indeed his wish.'

In another letter he writes, to relieve his parents from any anxiety on our account :—

'When the "Peace" gets back, and we start our missionary itinerary, our correspondence will be irregular; we shall often miss the mails; do not be anxious; always remember that "no news is good news." We shall never let an opportunity slip by. Do not be anxious. Trust us to the gracious keeping of the great God Whose we are, and Who has so kindly cared for us hitherto.'

In the same letter he describes the place of the baby in missionary work: 'I have a lanky boy from the cannibal Bangala folk here, from whom I am already trying to get at their language. He is engaged at the cost of 7½d. per month. Ibolo is his name. He does not steal much, although when he steals little treasured bits of meat from the other boys, while they are asleep, he is a rare hand at telling lies How-

ever, he is a much better lad than I expected to get from these wild folk. He does not shirk work which is given him to do, and likes to sit beside me at night making letters on a slate. What would you say if you saw a cannibal boy looking intensely at baby! So the little pet is tended by children of cannibals, and is soon going to see them at home! What an attraction it will be—a white lady and a little white baby! Already baby has many friends; men as well as women like to take him in their arms. "Is he a boy or girl?" they ask. "A boy," "Ah! that is capital; he will work and trade, and help to make you rich. What a nice baby, so white, too." One man comes over all the way from Kintamo sometimes to see and nurse him. He brought Baby a fowl the other day, and Baby, of course, made a return present. In the town little black babies are handed to me sometimes. Of course I take them for a while, and returning the sturdy, chubby little thing, say "Mwan' omobwe" ("A bonny child"). This pleases them, and they say to one another, "That is the father of the little white baby at the Mission." I reckon that with dear Margo and the little one, we shall make friends with very wild folk. An easy "quite at home" manner, and such attractions will carry us very far. So Baby early becomes a

helper in our work for our Heavenly Father. How I long to get to my proper work! Margo's health is splendid; no pale cheeks and blanched lips as so many feared. Her bright, active disposition does more for her than quinine, I reckon. Baby has got on famously, and is as lively as you like. He is the first little white baby born in these regions.

'I am continuing this on Sunday evening. I have just translated the 67th Psalm, and Margo has been adjusting it to a pretty and simple chant, of which Mr. Saker was very fond. We have tried it over with the boys; it goes capitally. I want to do some more Psalms during this indefinite time of waiting before we go up-river. I have also offered to translate the Gospel by John, if the two Combers and Mr. Weeks will manage the others. Then, if possible, on the steamer I will try an Epistle.

'Nlemvo is by this time, I hope, returning to me. He has been preaching about in the towns around his native place. On one occasion about two hundred and fifty people were present. He has done it all alone; he plays on his cornet and then talks to them. He is just the sort of boy to be a centre around which to bring other lads. There will be enough native workers in Congo. He should make a good evangelist, and

soon be like a second white man with me. As a rule, I shall not take and locate people far from home, but in his case it is different ; the light can soon be spread around his home from San Salvador. Then, too, he needs further training and teaching, and no one will have the same care for, and influence over him that I have. I hope, therefore, that he will stay and work with me for a good time, until he can take charge of a sub-station in my diocese. He is engaged to be married to a very nice girl who is now with us. She is the best girl on the Mission. Nlemvo is very fortunate to get her. There is good evidence of spiritual life and growth in both of them, and there are great possibilities of usefulness. Aku is giving us hopes also. She has been much more thoughtful of late, and there is very little to find fault with. She is certainly trying to do what is right. These desires received further quickening three weeks ago when she was bitten by a snake.

'Our house here has galvanised iron walls, and a grass roof. Three good-sized rooms have served to make us fairly comfortable, and give me a decent, quiet study. We might make ourselves very comfortable here (at Arthington), if that were the end and aim of our lives, but I have always regarded myself as a stranger and sojourner here,

and that my duty is up-river. Not because there is nothing to be done here, but because it is advisable that some one of experience should plan and arrange for the stations up-river, and there is no one available but myself. Then again it is considered important that one of the senior men take a station well up-river. With Mr. Comber at Wathen, Mr. Grenfell here, if I am near the Equator we are fairly well distributed, and can each be in an important strategic position. Everything clearly points my duty to go forward, and my future home will most likely lie somewhere between Lukolele and Bangala (Iboko), but there is a great deal to be done before we can settle down. Mr. Grenfell has made a survey of the field, but so wide have been his journeyings, and such great distances have been covered, such activities, and drive and hurry to get over the ground before supplies and stores failed, that while our maps are very full, we know as yet very little of the peoples.

'Now comes the second stage. I propose to make the "Peace" a floating Mission station, to visit all likely places and important townships, to stay some days and even weeks where desirable, to get to know the people, and be known by them. I shall thus be able to determine the best positions to be occupied

by us. Dear Margo goes with me ; she and your little grandson will be great attractions, and do much to make friends with the blustering yet timid cannibals. At present we have not enough colleagues to occupy other points : death has thinned our ranks, but we hope that as always, it will have the effect of filling them. We are called to a great and glorious work, and need not falter or fear. Our Master means to accomplish the task that He has commenced. We are fighting in a cause sure of victory. With His continual presence and constant guidance, our work must spread and prosper. So, although shorthanded and beset by many difficulties now, we set about our preparations for the establishment of more stations without doubt or question.'

Chapter XII

Up the River

'To love God we must all His creatures love;
To love His creatures, we must first love Him.'
BAILEY.

AT last, by August, the 'Peace' had returned from the Emin expedition, and we were able to start on our long-intended trip up-river to visit the towns, and find out the best strategic point to build the next station.

Mr. Whitley, who had been acting as captain of the 'Peace,' immediately started on his journey to England; Mr. Charters was to go with us; Mr. Biggs was once more left in charge of the station. As Mr. Percy Comber was needing a change, it was arranged that he should come up to stay with Mr. Biggs during our absence.

On Saturday the 9th we had got everything ready for the start. Holman had only to go down to Kintamo on some State business previous to starting up-river. I went with him for the sake of the outing, and went to pay a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Billington, of the American Baptist Missionary Union. Whilst

there the mails arrived, and to our bewilderment and distress we received the news that God had taken Mr. Comber to Himself. It was a terrible blow to Mr. Bentley. I shall never forget how utterly paralysed he was with grief. The friendship had been very strong. They were so absolutely united in their views about Mission work, and how it should be carried on; indeed they were friends closer than brothers. The sad news gave him some special correspondence, so that we did not start until the Tuesday instead of on Monday as we had expected.

How much he appreciated his old friend and colleague will best appear from the following letters. To Mr. Percy Comber on the occasion of his brother's death, he says: 'What a brother dear Tom has been to us! What a brother to us all! You must feel lonely; what can I say? God alone can sustain you; only His Hand can dry your tears. . . . For dear Tom, what a change, what joy, what rest from the constant care! We do not know what to do without him; we can but join in his joy. If any one has received a "well done" he has. He has entered upon the joy of his Lord. Try to think of his gain rather than your loss, if possible. It is easy to pen this; but as I write the tears flow fast, and if I cannot

master my feelings, how can you? . . . We all looked up to him. How helpless I feel now as the Senior of this Mission! How dark it seems after his bright light has gone out. . . . A month will have passed before this reaches you. Do as Tom did, when he lost the dear wife whom he has now rejoined. Come away for a while. I am writing a letter to all the stations and begging immediate reply to all queries. Meanwhile, I must run up to Lokolele, and as at least six weeks must elapse before I can get a reply, I purpose staying away about seven weeks, not longer. Meanwhile, things will take shape a bit. Be here, then, as soon as you can; Biggs will be alone until you come. You have gone over the line quite recently, and will be able to advise. After a talk and planning as to down-river, you can come a cruise with me in the "Peace." Bring some warm clothes, for it is cold sometimes. I shall be anxious until I hear from you again as to your own health.'

To the brethren at Wathen, Lukunga, San Salvador, and Underhill, Mr. Bentley wrote, under the shadow of this bereavement, discussing future plans and conditions:—

'The heavier responsibilities that come upon us make us more dependent upon our Divine Master, and they should lead to a quickening

of spiritual life, and more careful attention to those things which minister to our own spiritual health and strength. This may be a rather delicate matter to touch upon, but I would ask that special thought and prayerful consideration be given to the question as to how we may be more careful about our spiritual health. There ought to be some opportunities for prayer among the missionaries, beside the usual prayer among the people on the station. Prayer at such times must be of a certain general character, while those prayers when brethren meet together alone are of a very different kind. The brothers and sisters on our stations should certainly meet together once a day for prayer.

'As to the Sunday evening prayer at nine o'clock, I must confess that it is not always a means of grace to me. I should like to have a general expression of feeling about it, and suggestions for some more favourable time, if possible. Nine o'clock is late, and it requires much grace to maintain the institution at all sometimes, especially if we do our duty on that day. I should like to know your feelings and ideas on these points. It is certainly advisable to stick to rule as far as possible, and to have a system of work.

'Next to the necessary work done on the station, food, transport, and buildings, attention

must be given to the study of the language. If any one has only one hour a day to spare, and it is a question which is to have the time, study or school, study should have the preference, for until a missionary knows the language he cannot do much. Work through an interpreter is generally unsatisfactory. This, you will say, is self-evident; but it is just such self-evident things that need to be emphasised. At San Salvador it may be possible to give more time and attention to schooling, but I feel that anywhere else not much can be done on a large scale as yet. No one is justified in spending time, which ought to be devoted to his own study of the language, in teaching half a dozen children to write. We should, on no account, teach English. Do not allow any English to be spoken. . . . Until a missionary is able to speak with fair ease in the native language, he is of but little use for direct Mission work. He will be able to communicate to the little "coterie" around him, but he will not be able to teach the people at large. The study of the vernacular must therefore take the precedence of work, when the most pressing daily duties have been attended to.'

It will be agreed that these suggestions were dictated by experience and by a regard for the best interests of the work.

THE LITTLE WHITE BABY.

Drawn by J. Finnemore.]

[*To face page* 209.

Our experiences on the journey to Lukolele again gave proof of the value of family life. The surliness of the Balobos vanished before the baby, and that gave the missionaries their opportunity. When we arrived, they as usual, in a surly way, told us to 'go away'; they had nothing to sell. But the baby was having his bath. Mr. Bentley called for the little man, and as soon as he appeared the disagreeable attitude changed. The beach was soon crowded, and a landing was invited, although a minute before we had been told to go away.

At the Moi towns, which we next visited, it was the same story. They signalled their displeasure at seeing us, and were shouting to us to 'go away,' when they caught sight of the baby. One minute after they had told us to 'go away' Mr. Bentley was standing on the beach among the people. Such a din, screaming, and crowding to see the little child then arose. Nearly every one wanted to hold him in their arms for a minute. One woman in a smart cloth, her body dusted with powdered cam-woods, handed him back to us with his little white dress tinted red. The next woman, in mourning, had been rubbing herself with charcoal and soot. Some of this appeared on his dress. His face, hands, and feet had all been felt, and showed finger-

marks. Happily the baby took it very pleasantly. He laughed and crowed, and seemed to enjoy the excitement. 'Ajeke,' they shouted, 'he is laughing;' and so he was, most heartily. But he needed a good bath when he got back to the steamer.

After leaving Lukolele, where Mr. Richards and Mr. Darby had made good strides towards settling, and getting hold of the people, we next stopped at Ngombe, where we were not so favourably impressed, though they are said to be wishing for a white man to settle with them. We were more pleased with the Buxinde people where we anchored on Saturday evening, as it was too late to go on to Irebo that night. Half an hour's steaming next morning brought us to Irebo. On Monday morning we steamed into the lake. Here baby had a fever, and was evidently very sadly, moaning continually; still he had to be brought out to be seen by the people.

As we anchored at the first town in the lake, we found that the place was on fire. Heedless of doubts as to how his interference might be regarded, Mr. Bentley rushed to help, calling to some of the steamer crew to go too. With their assistance the fire was put out. If this had been a Congo town probably the fire

would have been attributed to witchcraft on our part. But whether these folk were too pleased at Holman's alertness in helping them, or whether they took more note of natural causes and were less superstitious, or whether once more it was the advent of the white baby, I am unable to say. At any rate they were pleased, and not distressed, and the Chief sold Holman a fine fly brush, just like the one he was holding himself.

I now continue Mr. Bentley's own narrative :—

'Steaming along the southern shore of the bay of the lake, we found a creek ninety yards wide, and followed it for three miles. On returning we stopped at a "beach" place, where the canoes of the town are kept. The people there were very timid, but we were able to go into the town after a little parley, and presently the Chief came to see us. He was terribly excited and afraid to touch us, and behaved more like a wild animal just trapped; not that he wished to harm us, but the smallest remark to his people was as short and excited as if his house was on fire. He gave us a goat, and in offering it spoke in such a manner that, until his words were interpreted, I thought that he was declaring war to the knife. This was one end of the township of Bokoso. By and by a bigger Chief from further in the town arrived—

an old man, who had lost one eye. He sat down very near us at invitation, and even shook hands with us, examining curiously the hand he had just taken.'

'"You are not men, you are spirits," he said. We suggested that we were very warm and substantial ones, and that we were in the habit of sleeping and eating as other mortals; indeed we had just accepted a goat for our dinner from our friend beside him; did spirits eat and sleep?

'"But you are spirits, not men," he insisted.

'I pointed out my wife and baby on the steamer. Had spirits wives and babies? The people laughed at the idea, but then thinking perhaps, Why should not spirits have wives and babies? he continued, "No, you are spirits, you are not good; why do you always bring trouble? Our people die, our farms do not produce as they should, our goats and fowls die, sickness and trouble comes, and you are the cause. Why do you do this? Why do you not let us alone?" We told them that these matters were in the hands of "Iyanja" (God), and had nothing to do with us, or any spirits. It was this very business that had brought us to their country, to teach them about "Iyanja." Then we went on talking of death and God's purposes, telling them that

"Iyanja" was good and not bad, and that all the good things they had came from Him. After that they told us to be sure to return to tell them more. We steamed out of the creek, and after rounding a rocky point we anchored for the night near to a town, which in the morning proved to be the other end of the same Bokoso.

'Lake Mantumba is a shallow lake separated from Lake Leopold by only twenty-seven miles of lowland, if Mr. Stanley's calculations are correct. The water of both is very dark in colour, and both are characterised by shores of ironstone, rocky points, deep shallow bays, and a few small islands. Mr. Stanley believed that there existed a water communication between the two lakes. We found that in the bays, at the south and east of Lake Mantumba, the shores were for the most part not more than one or two feet above the water. We wished, if possible, to gain further information as to the supposed waterway between the lakes, for if it existed it would be easier to carry on missionary work on Lake Leopold through Lake Ntumba than by the Kwa and Mfini Rivers. We therefore carefully skirted the bays.

'Leaving Bokoso, we could not do much in the first bay on account of the shallowness of

the water. At the south-eastern corner we found a large town, Ngili-Wumba, where we went ashore for some time. Round the next two points, and in a smaller bay, we stopped for a while at another end of the same long township. The people here were very different from the Irebo folk, both in head-dress and in language. Their type of face resembled the Wabuma of the Kwa and Mfini Rivers at the south of Lake Leopold. The cloth they wore was of the kind made in the Kassai region ; it is a damask velvet made of the fibre of the frondlets of a palm, strips of the ribs of the frondlets being woven into the texture and then cut out to form a pile, which is therefore formed in the same way as European velvet, though it is not nearly so thick nor so silky. The cloth is a stout texture, and when reddened with powdered cam-wood, and edged with a short, thick fringe of palm fibre, has a rich appearance, and must be very durable.

'At the next town we stopped at the people came out to meet us with their bows and poisoned arrows. . . . Before long they were actually exchanging all their weapons of defence for cloth and beads! Before leaving Ngili-Wumba a native had volunteered to come with us to introduce us at Tchako. We entered a deep bay,

and as we were then at the southern end of the lake, we expected that, if any waterway existed, we should soon find it. At the end of the bay we found a creek fifty yards wide ; the soundings gave three fathoms, and the current was flowing into the creek. Passing an opening from the south we came to another creek, running north and south. As it was nearly sunset, we turned northwards, and came out again into the lake, and anchored for the night. Next morning, hoping to discover the communication between Lake Ntumba and Lake Leopold, we retraced the last part of the journey, and followed the southern creek. The shores of the creek were thickly wooded with good useful timber, but very low, not more than six inches to a foot above the water, while the water-mark on the trees (carefully measured) showed a rise of eleven feet. The creek became narrower and narrower, and it looked as if we had come to the end ; but in half a minute it turned sharply, and we reached a broad creek, which proved to be the opening seen the previous night. Turning southwards we followed it until we were nearly six miles from the lake. The soundings gave three or four fathoms of water ; but the creek had narrowed to twenty yards wide, with plenty of snags ; so although the water slowly running up

assured us that the creek extended much further, we felt that it was too risky to go further on our precious steamer on account of these snags. We returned to the lake by the broader creek. We passed several fishing camps.

'There can be little doubt but that the country here is to a very large extent inundated in the rainy season, perhaps by ten feet of water right away to Lake Leopold, and up to the Bosira River. It is possible that there are low inhabited hills and ridges; such is the nature of the country near the Uruki-Bosira.

'A little further along the shore of the bay we came to the township of Ikoko. We landed on the Chief's beach, amid a dense crowd of most agreeable people. The old Chief Ntula was afraid to come until I sent a message to him to fear nothing, "all his children were on the beach, surely he would come too." He did so, and wished me to go back to his house, so with my wife I went. Conversation was carried on thus—I spoke to Ebokea, an old schoolboy of Mr. Fuller's in the Cameroons. He had been so long on the "Peace" that he knew enough Kibangi to speak to Mongongo, a man who had come with us from Irebo, and who could make himself understood by the Baxiengi, as the Ntumba people call themselves.'

The talk began by Mr. Bentley saying that we white men had come to see him, and make friends with him. We could not talk much with him now, but we were hoping to learn to do so, for God in heaven had sent us with a message to him, and when we came another time we hoped to be able to tell him a little of the message. We tried to make sure whether they had any idea of God. Yes, they had. Well, God had a beautiful place where He wanted us to go and live with Him when we died; but if people lived bad, wicked lives, He could not let them live with Him.

'But,' was the reply, 'if God is good, why does He let us all die?'

Ntula soon began to talk of death and spirits; their minds were evidently full of this question. We told him that it had always been so. Everybody had to die one day. God only put us here for a little while. In this way we started our message; they were much interested. We exchanged presents. The old man came on board the steamer, and before we left said that whenever we liked to visit the town, his beach was at our disposal. He sold us his best royal hat, in appearance something like that worn by the clergy of the Greek Church, and a very fine piece of work it is. Mr. Bentley was now quite

set up in the insignia of native royalty—hat, knife, and fly brush. It was near sunset when we left, so we only steamed round the promontory, and anchored in the next bay behind Ntula's town. Next morning we found a little further on another creek leading from the E.S.E. The Chief of one of the neighbouring towns was with us for a while, and said that the cloth described above was bought up the creek from the Bankundu ; the creek extended for a long distance.

That was on Saturday. That afternoon Mr. Bentley was on the shore looking after the wood supply and other matters. He was far from well. I now continue his narrative :—

'On the Sunday, having anchored off Lukengo, we went ashore, one of the usual broad, long street towns extending very far. I walked for over a mile in one direction, but returned not feeling very well. We understood from Mr. Stanley's map that another town, Bikulu, was near by, and started to find it in the afternoon. Not being able to do so, we anchored beside an island. Next day we passed some more rocky points. The next we had to run in the lee of an island for the water was so rough, and our awning stanchion so weak, that it was nearly jerked overboard by the rolling of the steamer. In the

afternoon I was too unwell to take much interest in things, so we ran past several towns on the north-east of the lake, and slept off Ngulu, reaching Irebo the next afternoon.

'The people on the lake are like the Bambunas in many respects ; they were very agreeable. We were able to go ashore, and found a good population. There is, with little doubt, water communication with Lake Leopold. We ascended two creeks, one for 8½ the other for 6½ miles. But the creeks are not fit for steamer work, though a boat or canoe would do well. Where we turned back in each there were three fathoms of water, and marks of a rise of eleven feet of high water carefully measured. They run through forests and are full of snags, and we had to be very careful. We did all but the most northerly corner ; that was passed because I was ill.

'On returning to Irebo on August 24th, after our tour of the lake, we found the people there at war with each other. We learnt that the previous day a boy from Ipaka's town had been beating the drum of one of the several towns that made up the town of Irebo, when some one suggested that this must be a challenge from Ipaka's people. Accordingly the young rowdies hastily assumed their war-paint, and their spears, which are seldom out of their hands. The boy who had

drummed was beaten out of the town, and another of Ipaka's people who happened to be there was shot dead. Meanwhile, the rowdies had gone to the jungle behind the town uttering defiant cries. Fighting is not carried on in the town, but the proper thing to do is to go out behind in the open. Ipaka's people, hearing the noise and defiant shouts, also went out to the jungle; execrations were exchanged, and war commenced. By and by the news reached the combatants that blood had been spilt,—a slave of Ipaka's had been killed. Such an occurrence made everybody deeply anxious lest he should be the next victim; the result being that no one further was hurt that day; indeed, the fighting was at an early hour adjourned until the day after next.

'When we arrived, Ipaka's warriors were delighted to see us, for they assumed that of course we would help them on the morrow, and promised to give us a couple of goats. This we declined to do, and were taunted with being frightened like chickens, and so forth. We still refused, and explained our mission, and said that the stupid quarrel should not be continued; but they would not listen to us.

'The women wailed over the corpse, and the men swore vengeance. We sat under the trees opposite Ipaka's house and saw the war parade.

There was a sound of shouting, singing, jingling native bells on the end of a stick. Then some fifteen spear-heads appeared above the top of a house, and Ipaka's army came in sight, eighteen to twenty strong, with three or four large shields. One shield was new, and bound up in broad leaves to keep it clean! Three or four had guns, some wore feather head-dresses, some monkey-skin caps. Their faces and bodies were streaked with coloured clays. A man was beating a double bell, singing and dancing in heroic attitudes. Great and wonderful intentions! What would not that little army do! But the presence of my wife quite upset the order and discipline. First one stopped to look at her, then two stepped aside to explain to me the marks on their shields, and another stopped to show my wife the long, tongueless bell. The war fervor flagged in the bosoms of the great eighteen, and a very violent bell-beating was needed to lead off the braves to another street.

'Next morning, wishing at least to renew our protest, we sought Ipaka, and found him at last with two of his wives in a bit of jungle on the borders of the town. Opposite him squatted a medicine-man, painted and besmeared, cursing and arguing for the war. He was shaking a rattle and gazing into a cooking-pot full of

water. Mysterious bundles lay on the ground. Our intrusion made him feel awkward. After a little more rattling, muttering, and gazing at the water, he told us all was over, and we returned to the town together. Ipaka professed not to worry much over the war matter, but did not trouble to stop it. A man had been killed, and his people wanted to fight. They might if they liked, he had nothing to do with fighting, he was a great man and a Chief—such notable people never go to war themselves, they prefer to pay others to get killed! However, when we left, we found him haranguing two Chiefs of neighbouring towns, who were relatives of his, bargaining for the price of their assistance.

'He would like us to go and build there. He has been told of the death of our brother (T. J. Comber), and the possibility that we shall have to go elsewhere, but insists that we shall go to him. We have promised him that on my return down-river I will talk the matter over. He wants us to doctor him when sick, and to live with him. This is just what we want him to say. There is no earnest desire for the gospel, but his folk come to Lukolele to sell food to our brethren Richards and Darby, and he would like some quiet, pleasing white men to go and live with him also.'

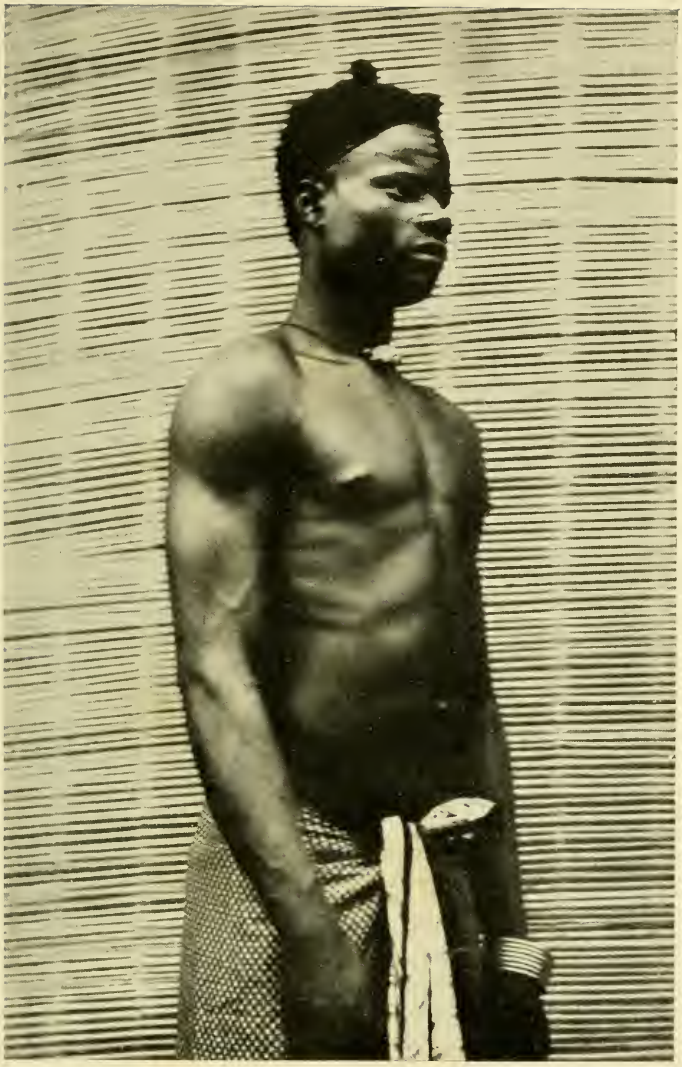
'Two days later we were at the Equator station of the American Baptist Mission. We went up the Lulanga River, ascending it the length of one day's steaming to see the big towns as far as Molongo ; we were well received everywhere. We could not be far off the Pigmy country, for we saw several adult people of small stature ; but, as we could not afford time to travel about simply to satisfy our curiosity, we returned after the one day, and made our way up towards Bangala, where we arrived on September 2nd.

'We have been much concerned to obtain workpeople for the Mission. First we had Kroo boys, then Loangos were induced by us to leave their country for the first time. Other people on the river profited by this to engage Loangos also, and these became to a great extent the workpeople of the Lower River. When the French Government annexed Loango, one of their first acts was to stop the exit of Loangos, who were aiding in the development of the Free State instead of the French territory. Accordingly they issued a law prohibiting the engagement of Loangos for foreign employment. To this they adhered so closely that when M. Carrié, the new French bishop, visited the Upper River recently, they would not allow him to have

Loango carriers, as he preferred to travel by the Congo State route.

'The State have been employing a large number of men from the neighbourhood of Iboko. The State officers assisted us in our quest, and we have engaged two gangs, one of sixteen and the other of twenty-four men, as steamer crews, on the condition that they are not to be employed for transport work. We went up to Lusengo, twenty miles above Bangala. The readiness of men to engage for service is a most hopeful prospect for the future of the Upper River. At present in the well-populated districts about here there is nothing for men to do but quarrel and fight; no inducement to trade, though every one wants to be rich. Now, after two years, the men may earn enough to be able to afford several slaves; those who have returned are already chaffing other folks, and call those who have not seen the white men "bushmen." At first the State could only venture to make the experiment with a few of these wild cannibal folk, but it is time for us to begin now, and we hope that, divided up between the stations, and kept well in hand, they will turn out good workmen. They are men of splendid physique, and their term of service will give us time to influence them.

'At Bangala, amongst others, we made friends



A BANGALA WORKMAN,

THE YOUNGER SON OF THE CANNIBAL CHIEF, MATA BWIKI.

[*To face page* 224.

with one smiling, amiable, mild-looking Chief who had eaten seven of his wives, and had somewhat beggared himself in consequence. The last cannibal feast they had had in his town was less than five months ago. They are fine, well-made fellows, not wilder material than the Kroo boys, but far cheaper than any other labour employed, their wages being about £2 a year. Best of all, this brings us in touch with people nearly eight hundred miles from the coast. Amid much shouting and cheering we started down on Thursday afternoon.

'The next day we met the State steamer coming up from the Pool, bearing the sad news that our brother Whitley was dead. Three days later we met the "Henry Reed," and our brethren of the American Baptist Mission told us that John Biggs had also been called away to the higher service. Crushing, bewildering, blow upon blow! How can this all be for the best?

'Passing Irebo later on, on our return, we again stopped, and Ipaka asked us again about our building there. He said his mind was still the same. The site was there for us, we could build as soon as we liked. When would we come? I told him of the sad news just received, but promised to send word home.

'The Chief Mayongo was very friendly, and

wished me to take his son, a lad of about fourteen years, with me to see the country and go down to the Pool. Doubtless he thought that the knowledge of the country thus gained would serve him when he grew up and went trading. So Masheke is with me. I am studying the language of the Irebo district with him. I wish I knew where I was going to settle, then I could commence my new language at once; but while there is uncertainty and delay I must work at something, therefore Kibangi and the language of Iboko (Bangala) progress side by side. I have already extracted the concord of the nouns, and have two hundred words or so of each.

'The next day we reached Lukolele again. We were to have left some of the Bangalas here as workmen, but they had carried their piracy to such lengths, having murdered native traders from down-river towns, that they have palavers everywhere, and were afraid to stop there. It was a great disappointment to us, but there was no help for it, so leaving every available Loango with our brethren Richards and Darby, we took the Bangalas on with us to the Pool. As usual we found the water very rough between the mouth of the Kwa and Stanley Pool. It is no uncommon thing for travellers to be seasick for the last hundred miles. Getting down as far as Bolobo,

the Chief Ibaka there also requested us to come and build. They did not want any blustering neighbours with guns, but would like *us* to come. This was repeated several times, "How long will it be before you come? You surely can be back in two months' time." Again we spoke of our heavy losses by death, and promised to send word home to you. It was a most pleasant talk, and there was no reserve or coldness on their part, and a more cordial invitation we cannot expect or wish for.'

Mr. Bentley then dwelt on the recent losses of the Mission, and its prospects :—

'Has not God's time arrived?—the fields are white. Certainly our present trials and losses are inexplicable, and sorely perplexing. Comber, Whitley, Biggs, so soon after Darling, Shindler, and Miss Spearing. The only solution to the difficulty which has yet come to me is this: God's time has come, and is overdue, the only way to rouse the Churches to realise the needs of the heathen is thus to take away her workers. If this does not quicken and lead many to personal sacrifice and consecration there is little hope that anything else will. I do not write this as though there were none interested, or as though we are forgotten. We are well sustained by prayers and means, but may not our Society very humbly see

in all this a Divine recognition of our work? The trying of gold in the furnace as only gold would be tried? The purging of a fruitful vine that it may bring forth more fruit? I do not know how far these words will convey my idea, and the thought which is strengthening me.

'Certainly the river is far more ready than I expected to find. Things are indeed full of hope. If some friends at home were to make a trip and and see for themselves, they would speak more sanguinely even than I do, for I know the people and their ways, and can appreciate the various difficulties better than one of less experience. The time is ripe for our establishing a station at any point between the Pool and Bangala. Our Underhill stores are nearly emptied. The tools and materials for two new stations should all reach Stanley Pool very soon. We have received serious and kindly invitations in two splendid districts—one, indeed, unequalled on all the river. I can speak from personal observation of the wide field there is for itineration among people who are ready to welcome those who can explain to them some of the mysteries of life, suffering, and death, and who would listen attentively to the story of the Cross.

'Although we cannot speak of populations such as in India and China, we find really populous

districts, towns of five hours in length. At Bolobo there are twenty-five miles of town on the banks, and plenty of people inland. If this population is maintained while the death-rate is kept up by cruel customs and ignorance, when this state of things is changed, how rapidly will the population increase! I cannot write a strong appeal such as is likely to move the hearts of the people at home. I can only tell what I see, and leave facts to carry their own weight.'

Referring to the deaths of the brethren Whitley and Biggs he writes to his colleagues: 'How terrible all this is! What a grief to Whitley's parents and friends, just as they expected to greet him. To us indeed this is specially serious and trying. Whitley had been my friend for more than fifteen years, while Biggs, by his sterling qualities, has won the hearts of all who have been associated with him. Poor Whitley started home as soon as he was liberated from the Emin Bey expedition, and no blame as to unnecessary delay can fall upon us. Biggs was a little out of tone when we left, but was looking forward with pleasure to the quiet time, when, being alone on the station with very few work-folk to bother him, he could put all his energy into the lingo. Percy Comber was to be up in a few days for a change,

and Dr. Sims promised to stay a week with him. As it happened, Mr. Murphy of the A.B.M.U. stayed three weeks, so that he was not alone after all. Our brethren of the American Mission did their best for him, and every attention was given, but it must ever be a regret and sorrow that none of us were with him at the last.

'Explain our trials and losses as we may, the fact remains that nine hundred miles are now thoroughly open to Mission work, and another five hundred to the Falls will be open long before we are ready to do anything with them. Send us more help, that the work on our present stations may be more effectively carried on, and that as soon as possible we may at least occupy the two important districts to which we are invited.'

A copy of the above Report was enclosed to his father to read and lend about, if it was not published. In a note at the end he adds: 'I am all behind in my correspondence, and what with Whitley's and Biggs's effects to settle, I have so much to do that I must leave all private matters to another mail.'

Owing to these losses by death, it seemed to Mr. Bentley that his work would lie rather in the development of the Lower River Mission than in exploration and extension on the Upper River.

The expected return of Mr. Grenfell, whose superior knowledge of steamers, and all matters pertaining to navigation in general, marked him out as the one specially fitted for exploration work, rendered it unnecessary for any other missionary to devote his time to it, and led Holman to the conclusion that it was his duty, notwithstanding his past successes as a pioneer and a road-clearer, to relinquish his plans respecting a long tour among the towns on the river-banks, in favour of more direct evangelisation and translation work, for which his language studies had specially fitted him. He decided, therefore, after prayerful consideration, that, as soon as Mr. Grenfell should have returned from his furlough in England, we would go and make our home in the Lower Congo. Holman felt, too, that it was desirable that one of the pioneers, who had known the why and wherefore of every step taken hitherto, should be at a central point to deal with any important business communications sent.

The following is an extract from a letter to the colleagues on the subject: 'Our brother Comber's death makes it my duty to stay either at the Pool or else at Wathen, as others urge me to do. I have been giving the matter full consideration. We ought to take up translation work at once. The duty of assuming that work

comes home to me, and is strongly urged by the brethren here. But if I am to work at Congo translation, I ought to live in a Congo district. If it is my duty to be here, it will be my duty to work among these people, and to do that I must study their languages, and should get little time for Congo here. If I am to translate into Congo, I must live among Congos. To the latter both Cameron and Charters strongly urge me, as also Richards and Darby. I have written to Wathen about it.[1]

'If it is settled that we are to go to Wathen I shall still insist on Percy having the brick house.[2] If I am to take up translations I must also take care to secure quiet, and could not undertake such an exhaustive correspondence, or attend to the smallest details of station work as our brother Comber did, but should seek as quickly as possible to push on with Bible work, and other necessary literature, with occasional journeyings to the near towns for evangelistic work.

'I have now had ten months of uncertainty this

[1] The reason as to why he preferred to go to Wathen rather than Underhill or San Salvador was in order to secure quiet. Besides, Wathen was at that time our most central station.

[2] The Brick House was the house planned by T. J. Comber for the double housekeeping of himself and his brother. It was the best house of the station.

time, and after seven and a half years of travelling, exploring, and general pioneering shall be glad to see some chance of a home wherever that may be.'

It will be gathered from this that Mr. Bentley was not anxious to claim pre-eminence for himself as senior. His one desire was to give all his time and strength to gospel work, both by voice and pen; and he was thankful to be allowed to leave all the 'mastering' and 'managing' of the station to others. Not that he shirked the work in order to spare himself, but there is a 'diversity of gifts,' and he gladly recognised this fact. No one worked harder than he did. He would say that he had 'no time to be ill.' I never knew him spend an idle hour, nor did he indeed ever stop work as long as it was possible for him to go on longer. In the evening when he might have been thinking of retiring for the night, he would still be talking with inquirers, though conscious often that there yet remained one or two more letters that must be written to be sent off at dawn the next day.

As one of the colleagues wrote to me after his home-call: 'He certainly worked while it was day. I was often amazed at his activity and ashamed of myself. No man can work as he worked, as to quality and quantity, and not stand

unique and alone, a wonderful example of what a man can do. We love and honour him; his memory is an inspiration to each one of us, calling us to do "all that is lovely and of good report," and to do it well.'

Chapter XIII

Settles at Wathen

'God-taught, thou labouredst with wisdom rare,
God-blessed, thy kind and loving words did win
Souls from the depths of ignorance and despair;
Leading to Christ and Life the whilom slaves of sin.'
N.

EARLY in January Mr. Grenfell returned to Arthington, and on February 1st we left for Wathen. I was glad of this decision, for I was due to go to Europe in a few weeks' time, and I should have less anxiety about him at Wathen than if he were at a new place amongst altogether wild folks up the river.

The journey down was a most delightful, enjoyable time. It was more like a prolonged picnic than a forced march. Our caravan gave us no trouble whatever. Baby was very good, and this time Holman had no Dictionary proofs in his pocket, which he felt obliged to read whenever he had a chance.

We arrived at Wathen on the morning of February 8th. Mr. Davies and Mr. Percy Comber were stationed there, and occupied the

brick house. We were shown into the same house we had been in when passing through the station about a year and a half before, and it made us feel quite homely at once. The people at Wathen were delighted to see the little white child.

The first Sunday in March that year Nlemvo was baptized. All the station hands went down to the river, as well as two Belgian State officials, our neighbours, who had never seen such a ceremony before. First Mr. Bentley read a passage of Holy Scripture and commented upon it. Then Nlemvo spoke a little. I could not understand it all, but Mr. Bentley was very pleased with his speech as being a well-connected, earnest, and manly discourse. That evening we had communion service together, seven in number — our two selves, Messrs. Comber, Davies, and Harrison, with Nlemvo, and Manwele, a lad who had been baptized at San Salvador.

In the end of April Nlemvo was married to Kalombo, and as he had been with Holman so long, and had become to him an almost closer friend than his own brother, my husband wished to make his wedding something very special. Accordingly, we not only provided him with a few of the most necessary articles of furniture, such as two or three cooking-pots, a kettle, some

plates and cups, &c., but had quite a nice little marriage-feast in the evening, to which half a dozen bigger boys and Aku were invited. It was a very pleasant evening, with plenty of fun, and native folklore and riddles. On occasions like these (and we have had several as years rolled on) Holman was more like the big, happy brother than the master and teacher.

On May 21st Holman took Baby and me down to Underhill, on our way to the coast. Between Wathen and Lukunga we had to make a big, circuitous route, as there was fighting going on between some of the towns which we should otherwise have passed through. We stayed a day extra at Lukunga in order to marry Aku to Mantu.

We had some unusual travelling experiences that journey. Holman tells of one: 'At the Mpozo we met with a nasty accident. The ferry-men were not there, so our Loangos did the work. After two or three boatloads had passed without difficulty, my wife and little one got into the canoe. I stayed to direct the other carriers. When the man who paddled reached the strong water it twisted the canoe's head down very much, and before he got it round again the canoe had drifted a good deal. He managed badly, and was carried on to a tree, two-thirds of

the way across, which was sunken in deep water. The upturned roots caught the canoe. It turned over on to its side and filled, but became fixed in the roots. I stripped at once and swam over to them. One man swam ashore with baby; and as the men wished to have a rope to assist in taking my wife ashore, we had to send a man over to get the rope which fastened my bed-bundle. My wife sat in the water on the side of the canoe for twenty minutes before we could get her ashore. The current was very strong.

'It was rather a trying time. Through our Heavenly Father's goodness no harm resulted, although we had still to stand in wet things (I in a wet blanket) for a long time, waiting till the canoe could be got off the snags, righted, and sent across once more before we could get our boxes and a change. Happily we lost not a thing. The canteen had crossed first, so that we were able to get a cup of tea at once. The sun was hot; we felt as if we were having a vapour bath. We have indeed great cause for thankfulness, for the danger was very great. Had not the canoe become at once well fixed, I fear I should have lost both wife and child.'

Reaching Underhill, we found that Mr. Scrivener, who was also returning home on furlough, had a good deal to arrange before

he was ready to start; so we determined not to go by the 'Moriaan,' which was to leave in two days, but to go down together in the Mission boat, five days later.

Of that station, and of the work connected with it, Mr. Bentley wrote:—

'Such a busy station is Underhill, with often only one, or at best two, brethren at the station. It is hopeless almost to think of any Mission work being done there, unless there is a sufficiently large and permanent staff, so that the brethren can take it in turns to go out itinerating into the district behind. It is deplorable that earnest men have to toil away at a sort of Pickford's office, without the possibility of doing the work they came out here to do, and which would cheer and encourage them amid the weariness and drudgery of the endless routine of station and transport service. Now no one can go out for a little itineration without disorganising the station. Yet a good opportunity for real work presents itself. For, besides the possibilities of itinerating, the gentlemen of the English Trading House about Matadi kindly allow us to hold a service on Sundays among the natives of the interior who have come to their factory to trade. Sometimes as many as three hundred have been found there,

and they listened with interest. I found some people from about a hundred miles in the interior one Sunday when I was there. That is a class of work the fruit of which may never be known to those who carry it on. But it matters little who sows or reaps, as long as God is glorified and souls saved. At least it must draw attention to the gospel message, and tend to prepare the country at large for it.'

Soon after this it was proposed to relieve the missionaries of much strain by sending out some one specially for the station routine work. But Mr. Bentley's experience led him to fear this, his reasons being that if the one sent were a true and earnest Christian he would be dissatisfied, unless he also had equal chances of Mission work with ourselves. 'On the other hand, if he was given to understand that he came as a business man *only*, he might be very liable to insist on being let alone in his department, and resent any suggestions. The Mission as a Mission might not be so dear to him, and he would not feel the same interest in keeping down the prices, or he might not feel the same need of other proprieties. The Roman Catholic Church, with its splendid, terrible discipline, can manage such difficulties, can have its *pères* and its *frères*—but we are different. When

anything here needs attention, and is being discussed amongst ourselves, we are all on equal footing.'

We left Underhill about eight o'clock in the morning of the sixth day. There were fifteen of us all told, and for two nights we had all to sleep in the boat. It was a crush! We reached Banana on Sunday morning. We went on board the 'Afrikaan' at once, although it was not to sail until Tuesday morning; and Holman was graciously invited to stay on board with me until the steamer should start. My own cabin was too small even to sit in, but Mr. Scrivener kindly allowed us to share his as much as we cared to that day.

Feeling that his time would be better spent in visiting Mission stations, and then going up to Underhill by the mail steamer, which was due in a couple of days, rather than returning by the Mission boat, which would take at least five days, if not more, rowing up-stream, he sent up the boat in charge of the boys, and went to visit Dr. Scholes, at Mukimvika.

Dr. Scholes took him into the town, and Mr. Bentley was delighted to find the dialect spoken by the people there very nearly the same as that at San Salvador, once more justifying the choice of our missionaries of the language of the capital

for their linguistic studies. He says: 'The people on the coast are called Asolongo. Their lingo is almost identical with that at San Salvador, much nearer them than Palabala or Wathen, so that our brethren at San Salvador can itinerate thoroughly for 150 miles westwards. I only noticed two or three words different, and was quite at home with them. Four Asolongo wished to enter our service, and I engaged them. There are a nice lot of people about. It is not at all a bad place, and should be very healthy; about two hundred feet above the sea and swamps, a good breeze always blowing. I much enjoyed my week there.'

After returning to Underhill he paid a visit to San Salvador before going back to Wathen, and in a letter to his brother he wrote, on August 1, 1888: 'I have just returned from my visit to San Salvador, and much enjoyed the fortnight among old friends and scenes. The work is encouraging and full of promise. There is a church of eighteen members, half of them women. I have been much pleased to note the type of the native Christians. They support an evangelist of their own, and pay him five dollars a month to do three days a week of itineration in the neighbouring towns. The change of heart is well marked, in some cases a wonder to many.

Altogether I am very happy at what I have seen. I only hope that the Portuguese will let us alone. There is some danger that they may interfere with our schools. What a nuisance it is that the Government cannot let religion alone! I had a long talk with the King. Poor man! he says we confuse him. "Surely the Virgin Mary is greater than Jesus Christ?"'

That Mr. Bentley was not a recluse, nor indifferent to the comforts of home life, will be evident from the following extracts: 'I am living over again my bachelor life. I had become so dependent on my wife, and she took so many things off my hands, and brightened my home and life so much, that it seems strange and unnatural not to have her here. But I am making the best of a bad business by going out pretty often into the district. She had a rough time of it, one way and another. I do not grudge her the rest and change. My boy, Baluti, looks after my house and is responsible for any disorder. He is kept well up to the scratch. He does gardening till breakfast-time (about eight o'clock), then his house duties; then he deciphers my manuscript, writing out clear copies with my Hall's typewriter. In the afternoon he goes to school; after that more typewriting till evening. He is a fine boy, about thirteen

years old, and gives very good evidence of a changed heart. I shall be quite ready to baptize him when he asks me to do so. I should be rather slow to do so with boys of his age as a rule, but there can be no doubt about Baluti. He tries to please and get on, and takes great care of me. He was Mr. Biggs's boy, and having lost one master does not want to lose another, and objects to any indiscretions on my part. So now I have told you all about my home life, and how I manage in my wifeless home—perhaps too detailed, but details such as these often interest.

'As to Mission work, we have services every morning, prayers and an address. Twice in the week I have a class on St. John's Gospel; two other evenings Mr. Oram takes the boys in Old Testament history. One evening is given to industrial classes. Only on Saturdays we have no class, for very often one of us goes out for the week-end to some neighbouring town. On Sundays the one on the station conducts a service in the morning. We go over to a near town in the afternoon. Nlemvo has his own district at Vunda, which he regularly visits every Sunday, and seems to be getting on well. Manwele, my other helper, has another district. I am stalking one or two towns just now which are rather afraid of white men. Our Sunday

service is rather a precarious institution. The people think they ought to be paid for their patronage. This, of course, we refuse to do, saying that our teaching is for their good, not ours. Some, though, are interested.'

When the missionaries at Wathen heard that the railway was likely to be laid two or three days' marches to the south of our station, seeing that this would necessitate regular communication southwards in that direction, Holman's old 'road-clearing' instincts prompted him to try whether, by going a couple of days still further south, he could not open up communication with the brethren at San Salvador by a shorter way than *viâ* Underhill. He felt sure from his charts that San Salvador could not be much further away from the railway on the south side than we were on the north. Accordingly, on September 4th, he started on a cross-country trip to San Salvador, where they arrived unexpectedly on the 11th. As Holman had only a short while before visited San Salvador from Underhill, the brethren were much surprised at seeing him there again so soon.

The travelling across country occupied only eight days. What they had tried so hard to do in the early days of the Mission was at last accomplished! It was an exceedingly interesting

journey, and again they passed through several towns where no white man had ever been seen before.

One Chief was very angry indeed, and said that they should not sleep in his town.

'The guides explained that we had been delayed on the road by giving medicine to sick people at a neighbouring town, but he continued angry and fingered his gun in such a nasty manner that the men were glad to get away from his presence. The native traders did not wish me to be turned out of the town like that, but everybody else combined to drive us away. The wife of the Chief especially became very excited, and called upon her fetish to take away the horrid "thing," meaning the white man.

'It was no use trying to persuade them to let us stay, and Nlemvo and all the carriers agreed that it would be dangerous to sleep in the town; they might do something to us in the night. So we asked the people to give us some water to drink, as we had had nothing since midday, and we would go on; but they would not give us any, nor even direct us to a stream.'

However, they gave the missionary party a couple of guides to take them out to the next town. But, on arriving at that town, they found there was smallpox in it, so that they could

not stay there. Holman waited long enough to see the men all in front of him, and make sure that no one stayed behind; for so ignorant and foolish are they in many things that some might have stayed in the town, thinking more of their present weariness and thirst than of the danger of infection.

After passing quickly through the infected town they could go on no more, and were obliged to rest. But there was no water anywhere, and they had to sleep hungry and thirsty after their long double day's march. It was so dark that they could not even look for firewood to light a fire to keep off the wild animals. It was a wakeful, wretched night. Their trouble did not end in the evening, for they had to start hungry and thirsty on the next day's march. Happily they had only to walk for one hour before they arrived at a stream, where the poor carriers were able to relieve their thirst, and Holman soon had a plate of porridge and a cup of tea. They had been without water since noon of the previous day.

At the next town they reached they were told they must not sleep there, but Holman insisted that he fully intended to do so, and wondered what real objection such noted traders as the Nsuka folks could have to white men

sleeping in their town. This touched their *amour propre*. 'On explaining to them who I was, and that I had no other business in the country but to teach the people good things about God, and was now on my way to my friends at San Salvador of whom they had heard, and that I had expressly turned out of my way to visit their town of which I had been told, they eventually showed me a house and asked me to give medicine to a sick man. They had only refused through fear of their town being visited by large armed forces. The next morning satisfactory results were reported of the medicine, and many other cases presented themselves.'

After leaving that town there were no extraordinary incidents on the road. They passed numerous tracks of elephants, but were fortunate not to come across any. Holman says: 'It is rather embarrassing to find oneself in a jungle path, to hear the bushes crashing, and the heavy tramp of elephants coming nearer and nearer, and not knowing where to turn, as the grass, much higher than one's head, makes it impossible to see two yards in front or behind. We also passed some very remarkable rocks, great masses of limestone rising bare and tall from the grassy plain, looking in the distance like huge ruins of Gothic architecture.'

At one town visited he was too weary to sit or do anything, but as he lay on his mat in the Chief's house, he wondered at the things which that man's diligence and energy had got together. He had a most interesting talk with him about eternal riches. 'Never did I see any one so deeply interested; he was impatient of any interruption. I urged him to go and listen to the teaching of the brethren at San Salvador and learn more.'

On the Tuesday they arrived at San Salvador, where Nlemvo was told that his mother was dying. On hearing this he at once hurried off to his own town. She died the following morning. Nlemvo showed his respect to his mother by contributing something like twelve pieces of a dozen yards each of Manchester prints for her wrapping, and Mr. Bentley sent a present of six yards of white satin, which was tied outside all and fastened with red braid. Holman went to conduct the funeral, and spoke of death and the need of heart preparation for it.

Returning home by a different route, in order to avoid the waterless plain, Mr. Bentley obtained a good idea of the possibilities of itineration in that part of the country. He passed through several towns, and was delighted to find the effects of the medicine given on the

out journey had won him a good name everywhere on his return. He had indeed been the talk of the country.

To Mr. Grenfell he writes about this journey: 'I have taken most careful and constant notes and bearings, and have some long triangulations with twelve long distances, and shorter communications. Constant sights of the great bluff of Kimpese. I cannot explain this in a few words, but you will see the result in the map I am sending.'

After the New Year he made another journey through the district.

'I have just returned from Lovo, a town about thirty miles from the station. It has been visited several times before by Messrs. Comber and Cameron. I went by the new road, a little north, and had several very interesting talks with the people. There are towns in all directions. We have an immense amount of work to do to reach all these people. Everywhere I was heartily welcomed. Though they received me kindly, they are most terribly disorganised, rowdy and quarrelsome amongst themselves; war palavers everywhere; every town at enmity with its neighbours. It is interesting to note that at Lovo and beyond as far as Nsundi, the dialect more nearly resembles pure Congo.

Nlemvo says that the women speak almost exactly like his people near San Salvador. I was trying to speak the Wathen style, but was frequently corrected until I found out the change.'

'The women are the heart of a country. Their language is the language of the people. Men travel and must adapt themselves to their circumstances, but the women stay at home and their children learn from them. This regular oneness of dialect is due to the fact that Mbanza Nsundi, just beyond Lovo, is the old capital of the whole province. Many customs are identical, and show what an influence the Kings of Congo had there. All the country round Wathen did homage and paid tribute to Ne-Nsundi until about sixty years ago. Since then the country has fallen into this wretched, disorganised condition. Of course it will take a very long time to reorganise and to repress violence. It cannot be expected in a hurry. Patience, patience, patience is the watchword of Africa.

'I was much interested in the smelting of iron actually in process. The ore is quarried from a chasm that I passed on the road. I heard the panting of a native bellows in a shed and turned in to see.'

In the autumn of that year there was a visita-

tion of smallpox in the country. Some towns nearly died out, others were decimated. In October, therefore, when writing to the Government about various matters, such as the tenure of land, he took the opportunity to send a request for lymph from the Government, in order that he might vaccinate the people, and if possible check the ravages of the disease, which was carrying them off in large numbers in the towns. The people were so delighted at the evident check that vaccination gave to the sickness that on vaccination days the house would be besieged with natives anxious to be operated upon, and he was entreated to favour the north bank, too, with a visit, in order to render them this help there. Needless to say that he welcomed this as an "opening" of that district, and a chance to tell the story of the Great Physician of souls.

'I went to Ewombe the other day and vaccinated eighty people in one day in a certain town there—people who would otherwise have objected to my entering the town.

> '"God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform."

He has many ways of bringing about His purposes.'

They also had a few cases of smallpox on the

station, but only two deaths, if I remember aright. In one of his letters he tells me: 'The smallpox patients are most carefully isolated. We have built a decent grass hut in the bush. Oram and I go daily within talking distance to leeward, deposit "chop," and learn details; we cannot trust any others to do it, the people are so very careless. We have threatened the whip to any who pass the cordon and communicate with the patients. The people are dying in the towns round about terribly: thirty at Mafiela, fifty at Mbelo, thirty at Ntumba, and so on. They only have it in a few towns, but in those towns they die like flies.'

Besides all the missionary work that we have been reading of in his letters, Mr. Bentley was at this time engaged in putting up a new house for himself, which he hoped to have ready by the time that I should return from England. It was of corrugated iron sheets. He did not send to England for the underneath beams, as there are plenty of good trees in the neighbourhood. Of course it meant some worry to get them cut and squared, but even if it did take longer, it was much less expensive than if he had had them from Europe. The house which we first occupied had been built by Mr. Darling; it had clay walls and a grass

roof. It was very suitable as an ordinary dwelling-house, but inconvenient for literary work, in consequence of the arrangement of the windows and sizes of the rooms. The windows were only 3 feet square and 3 feet 6 inches from the ground. The eaves of the house were low, to prevent the rain from constantly washing, and thus soaking, the walls ; so that in the large room there was never sufficient light unless the outer door was open, and even then in certain positions only. In any tornado we had hastily to rush and shut all the blinds and light our candles, whatever the time of day.

The two smaller rooms would do as bedrooms for one person, but neither are large enough as a workroom ; 'they get very stuffy and unpleasant,' he writes, 'when I have my two native helpers with me, and a third boy transcribing manuscripts with the typewriter. I should see no hardship in living in this house if my work lay out of doors, but as my work confines me so much to one room, I do not think I could keep healthy in this way.'

The site for the new house was soon cleared by the boys who were on the station for the sake of schooling and moral training. Although he only took measurements and put marks, he had to watch the carpenter to see that every-

thing was done properly, all of which ran away with some of his precious time.

In a letter, written in November, he says to me: 'However much I may let things slide, I cannot keep the crowd going without giving them some time and thought. Hardly ten minutes pass without some question coming, or something to attend to. At every turn and point I am reminded of your absence; such a lot of little burdens you would bear; so many interruptions you would stave off. I could do at least double the work if you were here to help me.

'I am taking notes from the railway folks. They have finished their survey, and have very kindly let me have a copy of their maps. Grenfell is also preparing a map of the country between here and the Pool. I intend to make use of their information, and my own, to make a little larger scale map of the whole country. I can fill in a lot of it now. If I were to die, much valuable information would be lost; no man has seen so much of the country as I have. I am very anxious to collect sufficient information to be able to work out a scheme of some systematic attempt at the evangelisation of the whole district.'

Writing just after Christmas, he tells us how

the season was celebrated: 'Not liking to be alone at such a time, Mr. Parminter, of the Sandford expedition, at Manyanga, had come over to spend the season with us. As it was market-day, we had to send out to buy food in the morning, so the service was not held until the afternoon, after which we made a feast for the house and big boys, using our best dinner service, and doing the thing handsomely, Messrs. Oram and Parminter waiting at table until all were served—'Kwanga,' 'Mwamba' (a stew of meat with the pulp of palm nuts, exceedingly tasty when well made), a plum-pudding, and blanc-mange. It took very little to satisfy them. Then we had the electric battery; and then magic-lantern views. After that, tea was handed round with biscuits. By and by we looked at our watches, and found it twelve o'clock! Horrors! to bed at once. Baluti did not sleep very well; others were in the same plight. Your cakes and chocolate had to come the next day. So it was a quiet, though happy Christmas.'

Then follows news of progress in the spiritual work of the Mission:—

'On Sunday, December 29th, I am going to baptize Nkaku (the first native Christian in this district). On Tuesday, January 1st, we

are going to form a Church. Nlemvo and Kolombo, Manwele and Nkaku will form themselves into a Church and admit at once Mantu and Aku, and Mr. Davies' boy, Lo, at their request. We have several other boys who are very hopeful. Baluti has already spoken to Nlemvo about being baptized, but he has not asked me yet.'

No rules were drawn up at the formation of the Church, but later on, in 1890, it was found necessary to formulate some directions for general guidance. 'If we could get every Christian to live up to the golden rule of doing to others as he would be done by, there would be no need for rules, but if such rules do not exist, Church discipline would be difficult and irregular.' That the natives could approve of and agree to such rules as these, were surely evidences that they realised that 'they who live should no longer live unto themselves.' In each heading it is 'give,' 'yield,' 'sacrifice' when necessary, but never 'gain.'

Here are the rules:—

'1. The deacons of the Church will perform their office from the day of their election until the 1st of January of the next year, no matter when they are elected.

'2. *Sundays.*—We Christians should respect

the Sabbath Day; the day of rest in all our affairs. We may work God's work only. The day of Sunday is not a day to go to markets, nor buy, nor sell. It must be hallowed.

'3. *Marriage.*—A Christian or Christians who wish to marry, must be married in holy matrimony only. They must give their promises before two witnesses and the teacher.

'4. A Christian having two or more wives to whom he was married during the time of his ignorance, may join the Church, but he is not eligible for Church office; for thus we are taught by Paul in 1 Timothy iii. 2, 12, and Titus i. 6.

'5. Any member of the Church, who, having a wife, shall marry another shall be expelled from the Church. Any convert, who wishes to to join the Church, having two or more wives cannot put them away, for the Lord Jesus has taught us that a man shall not put away his wife for any other cause except adultery. There is no other cause whatever which can nullify marriage.

'7. When a Christian marries a woman, if the relations of the woman who are in heathen darkness, demand payment, let him pay it. There is nothing to the contrary.

'8. A Christian may not buy another person;

this one form of buying alone is excepted—that of buying a slave-woman to be one's wife. If the woman gives her consent to become his wife, there is nothing to the contrary, for it is his wife that is redeemed; he is not purchasing a slave.

'9. A Christian may not sell any one, not even his own relations.

'10. He cannot take away the property of a slave, nor oppress.

'11. If the slave of a Christian man wishes to go away from among his retinue, the master cannot retain him.

'12. A Christian can neither give nor receive a slave in pawn.

'13. Should a Christian inherit or be presented with a slave, he may receive him, but the man shall not be his slave, but a free man. If a child, he shall be cared for until he is of age. So shall it be in the case of slaves bought or possessed during the time the believer was in heathen darkness.

'14. The Christian who had previously owned a slave, or was presented with, or inherited, a slave is as his father. He must protect, provide for, nurse his slave in sickness and help him. If another man shall seize a released slave to make him his slave, the Christian must demand him, to restore him to liberty.'

In his next letter to me, we have an account of the Church's formation :—

'I had previously talked with them about starting a Church—Church organisation, the duties and privileges of a Christian Church. Mr. Oram and I invited them to take tea with us on New Year's Day, and after a prayer meeting, conducted by Mr. Oram and addressed by him, I spoke to them again on the old lines and answered many questions. After a long conversation and careful explanations, it was proposed by one of them that they should then form themselves into a Church. The three other young men each spoke of their desire to do so, and the Church was thereupon formed. They then elected Manwele and Nlemvo as deacons, the former as secretary, and the latter as treasurer and superintendent of evangelistic work. We are anxious to see things shaped on business lines from the first, and it is understood that all work undertaken by the Church be maintained and supported by it. All the members are already active in Christian work. May the little one become a thousand!'

He was permitted to see it become so.

The native workers were zealous in their cause: 'Nlemvo and Manwele are getting on

well in the towns they visit, and are much esteemed and respected. Nkaku visits his town every Sunday. Kolombo visits the women of Kindinga. Two other towns have also been taken in hand.

'Now for your letter. Such a joy they are to me always, my precious one, yet I would far rather have you here than receive a letter. Glad am I that I can now count the months of waiting on the fingers of one hand.'

Of personal detail at this time, he notes the progress of the new house, and the interruption of translational work: 'I have not touched Luke again since you left. Such a lot has been crowded into these months. As soon as this mail goes, I have all Mr. Slade's effects to arrange, and the accounts for the whole station which he left. . . . It will be exceedingly awkward, as, previous to that, the book-keeping had been in four different hands, in each case the accounts having been taken over by the next man through the sickness, or death, of the previous one.'

In thinking of my own return to the field, he suggests new duties:—

'You are a bit horrified at my asking you to learn bookbinding and telegraphy. You know if we do much printing here we shall want to

know how to stitch our sheets together, so I think if you could manage to find out a little about it while you are in Europe, it would save much trouble, but do not *worry* yourself about it. As to the telegraph business, do you not remember we talked that matter over together, and decided it would be a good thing to rig up a telegraphic apparatus and through circuit, and let the boys play at learning, so that some of them might be able to enter the employ of the Railway Company? I should think it would not be much trouble to learn the alphabet and general tricks of managing the wire.

'So little Henry has begun to say his prayers. How much can he talk? I am not a bit more satisfied with my solitude than I was at first. It is only five and a half months since I bid you goodbye, but I am already comforting myself with the thought that I shall only have to write four more mails.'

Chapter XIV

The Man and his Methods

'*We cannot do without plans, but we need to watch them.*'
HOLMAN BENTLEY.

AT this point it may be well to interrupt the actual story of Holman Bentley's life, to consider in rather more detail the man and his methods of work, as brought before us in his own letters.

In one addressed to Mr. Comber, he says: 'It is important to have definite plans; but it showed true wisdom to recognise that the plans needed to be watched. God's ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts our thoughts. Happy the man who recognises this, and is willing to give up all pet schemes and preconceived ideas, and yield to the Guiding Hand of the Master! His work shall be blest, for he is working *with* the Almighty.' True consecration, as Dr. Miller says, is not devotion to this or that kind of service, but devotion to the Divine will.

First as to Education. From the very onset of his life in Congo, it was Dr. Bentley's idea to get the boys to come to the Mission to be taught, realising that there would never be enough white men sent out to accomplish the evangelisation of that large continent. If Africa is to be saved, it must be through her own children, and as 'not all boys who come to our stations can be expected to rise above the common herd, we need to be prepared,' he says, 'to have large numbers in order to have sufficient to send out as pastors and teachers to branch stations. These should have very careful nurture and training.'

But we had not been long at Stanley Pool when he realised that the time for schools had not come yet.

Writing to Mr. Comber he spoke very strongly to this effect, adding: 'Let us sow the seed broadcast. In due time we (or some one else) will reap, and when fruit shows we shall find that a movement of inquiry is spreading, and something big will result. To spend time and energy in teaching boys and girls to read and write at present, would only furnish traders with clerks, &c. *Preaching* and not teaching must be first policy. . . . It seems to me that this mistake of trying to get schools, before the time was ripe, will account for much of our disappointment.

We were grieved because we could not get scholars, and our attempts at schools were frustrated. Had it been good, we should have had them; but it was not, so our prayers were not heard. I have been very strong in advocating schools; now I feel that as a means they do not accomplish the end. Desiring earnestly as we do to know and perform our Great Master's will, may we be guided by Him into its apprehension and accomplishment. It seems to me that we should seek first to acquire the language by constant contact with the natives. If this is done by regular itinerations, in which medicine and preaching go hand in hand, there will arise a desire after light. Meantime, we can be preparing the books for the children to read when they do come, and God will send them to us when it is time.'

After referring to an article which appeared in the *Journal* of the Dutch Geographical Society, criticising the religious competition at San Salvador, and comparing the Roman Catholic Mission with that of the B.M.S., Mr. Bentley continued: 'Mantu, Nlemvo, Luzemba, Kavungu, and a few others are not a result of the schooling, but of that close personal dealing which is only possible with one or two boys, attached to a man deeply anxious for their

spiritual warfare. Schools should grow slowly; new-comers will then yield quickly to the influence of the well-trained ones. I can water a small garden, but a hundred acres would be but ill-tended. A large school may learn to read and write, but little else will result from that. Personal influence will be lost if too widely disseminated.'

Later on, however, when Wathen station was thoroughly established, and when, through constant itineration, several boys had collected on the station, Mr. Bentley recognised that the time had come to make their instruction an item of importance, and I find the following passages in his letters:—

'As those who seek for gold have to pass tons of crushed quartz or sand through the washing troughs to get anything that would pay, so we need to deal in numbers, if we would find and train many who would render service to the Great Master or their own people. Under the present circumstances we should not think of teaching only those who have given their hearts to the Saviour. We seek to teach and train any who come to us, and hope and expect that amongst these there are many for whom God entertains gracious purposes, and we find it to be so. We lose no time by teaching

and training a boy two years before his conversion.'

Some disapproved of our going in for a 'Boarding School' for various reasons. Mr. Bentley contested these ideas on the following grounds: 'We must be in a position to offer to board those from a distance, else it is impossible for them to come; and since the services of such boys as we have are valuable to their relations, they would certainly keep them to make use of them, rather than incur any expense with us. To get them for nothing but their clothing is the best we can hope for at present. I hope to see the time when we shall have some day scholars also, but earnestly hope that the day will never come when boarding schools will become a thing of the past. Why should five or six of the nearest towns only be educated? What about the towns four hours' distant, and four days' distant, and further still? Even when we are able to run our outpost schools, we are hoping to have some combination of boarding school and college on the station for our most promising pupils. Until there are schools among the towns so that no child is more than an hour distant from a school, we cannot break up our boarding schools. We shall be glad as soon as possible to establish

outpost schools, and only lament that we have not any senior boys available for such work, and deplore that they take such a long time to grow. As to the support, all our scholars have to work. They work either on the station or plantations from 9 to 12, and from 4.30 to 6; morning prayers and religious instruction are from 8 to 9, school from 1.45 to 4.30—that is to say, from 5 or 6½ hours the bigger ones work; 3½ hours are given to religious instruction and secular teaching; leaving them 5½ or 6½ hours for meals and play, and 9 for sleep. They consider that we are amply repaid, and have no notion that they are indebted to us. At the same time, the boys do like the station life, and appreciate the teaching, otherwise they would not stay a day. In their eyes the matter is one of give and take; there is no indebtedness on either side.'

As to the suggestion that a boarding school might not be conducive to a high moral tone, he says:—

'Is their home life pure? There is not a pretence of purity in their towns. The dance now in fashion is exceptionally vile. Our boys come from many towns. They do not clique together, and each lot would readily tell on the other. At the same time, some of the boys

1. BOYS' SWINGS AT WATHEN. 2. PLAYING *MBELE*.
3. BOYS' BRASS BAND.

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who are reliable Christian lads are often told to keep their eyes on the others for us, as one important piece of Christian work which they can do. Wickedness is minimised on the station, while in the towns there is no check. . . . The whole tone, discipline, and influence of life on our station are immeasurably better than a day school could exert.'

Mr. Bentley also found that having boys to live with us was a great help in itineration work; not merely because he was thereby able to do with fewer carriers, but because on entering the towns they would know where to find the friends who would be glad to see them, and welcome the white man for their brothers' sake. He always carefully planned out which towns he would visit, and took care to have the boy or boys from that town with him. It gave them a chance of seeing their friends, and brought us in closer touch with the people. Very often a stranger would accost him to inquire whether —— is well, and say, 'I am his sister.'

Another time, perhaps, a boy having obtained leave to go home from Saturday to Monday, would return with a new boy from another town near his own. Thus our circles multiply and widen, until we become related to nearly every township in the district, and visiting the district

becomes quite a big business. 'Every one knows that no present can be thought of, and as the boys tell me the local prices, I buy my food as cheaply as the natives do.'

Some thought that there was a danger of the boys becoming unfit for native life, and trying to 'lord it' over their uneducated townsfolk. Mr. Bentley's method did not encourage tendencies of this kind. His dispositions were carefully made to meet any possible difficulty. He explained them thus: 'At one time or another our boys will "try on" all sorts of things, but we allow no such nonsense. When they go out with me my boys have to carry table, chair, food, fowls, medicine bag, lantern, barter stuff, and a few tins of provisions, and anything else that is wanted, as well as their own blanket; every one has to help, Chief and slave alike, according to size and strength.

'On arriving at the halting-place, they fetch firewood before they rest. One of them cooks, another lays the table, and so on. I lighten things for them a bit on long, hard marches; but even then, every boy has to carry his own blanket and spare clothes, and food for a day or two, or beads for buying more. Any superficial superiority to their townsfolk soon disappears on their return to the town, when they find

that *il faut vivre*. Real superiority that will make them build better houses, work diligently to earn better clothes, we are delighted to notice.'

Some people advocated that we should teach our boys English, so that they might have the benefit of English commentaries and be able to read English books. Although they might do this in San Salvador, we were in the Belgian Congo, and were not allowed to include English in the school curriculum. There was also another objection to this, for even though we might teach the schoolboys sufficient English for them to understand, and even appreciate the shades of thought in theological or other works, what about the townsfolk in general? English could never become the language of the homes.

The twofold wisdom of opposing the teaching of English on the station appears in the following extract from one of Mr. Bentley's letters: 'A State official told me the other day that our school might be placed under control, and the matter was already under consideration. This is what I have been long expecting. Depend upon it, if we do not stop the teaching of English we stand a good chance of being restricted both in the State and Portuguese territory. We may

expect some very definite orders before long. Besides, the chief of the Roman Catholic Mission at —— told a Belgian friend the other day that they could not hope to make the people understand the mysteries of religion, but they could teach them to repeat prayers in French, and teach them to work. They despaired of Christianising, and intend to go in for civilisation. We must see to it that our actions and lines of work do not give the idea that we feel the same.'

I come now to Mr. Bentley's views as to the duties of native Christians. Upon these he had strong convictions. Writing a reply to the offer of a friend to support a native evangelist, he says: 'At present there is only one such native paid evangelist, and the Church at San Salvador is well able to support him, and does so. As the Churches increase in numbers and spiritual gifts, there is every reason to believe they will be able to meet all their own expenses, and it would be a mischievous precedent to accept outside help. It is their duty to do what they can for the Master's Kingdom, and if any one has gifts and opportunity to devote to that work, he should do it as a matter of course. The English Churches should pay for the work and expense of their English agents, the Native Churches for the work and expense of their native agents. This is the

position we have taken up. It would therefore be an altogether retrograde step to accept the help you so kindly offer towards native evangelists.'

Voluntary workers were already in the field at Wathen, as the next extract shows: 'Other lads are wishing to follow in Nlemvo's and Manwele's footsteps. The last time I went to Kindinga, Baluti asked me if he might talk to the children separately. I agreed, so he had a little group of his own. After it was over, on the way home, I asked him what he talked to them about. It was of Daniel in the den of lions, and very well had he urged the great lesson of the story. We must teach our people to be active workers, not æsthetic Christians. Nlemvo has his district, Manwele has his, and so on.'

The question of the multiplication of small sub-stations had to be dealt with. Receptive audiences had been found in certain towns, why not put sub-stations in those towns? Mr. Bentley saw the disadvantages of the method proposed:—

'The idea is a bit taking at first, especially for us who have been forsaken by towns around. But if one man married can efficiently manage a permanent sub-station, why do we have more on any permanent station? If two men should

be appointed to such a sub-station what would be the difference between a sub-station and a full station? I am a bit fearful that a sub-station would absorb too much attention and energy in routine work. We must hope too that instead of one town desiring our constant presence, many may wish us to settle with them, more than we can possibly undertake. I think, instead of building a few sub-stations, it would be better to have only one large station, and arrange for a good native house to be borrowed whenever and wherever we want one, and have several outposts, to be visited in turn by the white men. Perhaps the exodus from Ngombe (the town next to which we built) may remove the temptation to us here to be satisfied with what we did in our nearest town, and drive us to sow the seeds more broadcast.

'At Lovo they wanted us to have a house in the town so that we might visit them frequently, and hold services and school. No big expensive sub-station, but just a convenient grass-house for a school and services, with a bedroom at the end. We might have a house like that at Lovo, and another in another town, and this might be extended indefinitely whenever there are real earnest native teachers ready to be sent by the Church. Such work would be native work, and

should be supported by the Native Church, not from Mission funds. By and by we should have not one or two sub-stations, but many outpost stations ; many centres of light, in many directions.'

At that time the afternoon services on the station were attended by from about seventy-five to ninety outsiders. In the morning various towns were visited ; thus the seed was already being regularly sown by many waters, and the work at Wathen was accordingly soon so arranged that each colleague should have the chance to engage in the work which he had in view when offering for Mission service. The district surrounding the station was divided into four parts, and each of the four colleagues was responsible for the work in one district, on the condition that each should be willing to undertake the work of the station in his turn, and thus allow the other colleagues to absent themselves for a little while.

As to this method Mr. Bentley writes : ' We have decided to divide our district up into parishes, and each of us to take charge of one. It fixes the responsibility, and should tend to greater activity. I know mine for about two days' distance ; that is to say, I have crossed it in two or three lines, and have visited some, though

really only a few towns ; there would be plenty of work for a dozen men here. Altogether my own parish is about seven hundred square miles ; the other brethren have still larger parishes. There is about a village to the square mile, so you may guess that such a district to evangelise, in the time which I can spare from my translation work, leaves me very little time for correspondence or leisure of any kind. When I have finished Luke I must do another itineration ; meanwhile, Saturday to Monday outings are about all I can do. At present there is no spiritual awakening among the people here ; we are getting much nearer to them, but spiritual death reigns everywhere. Still, we must not faint or be discouraged ; there is no reason for it. The blessing will come all in due season ; we must be diligent in the sowing, and then there will be something to spring up when the season does come. The great difficulty lies in the ground to be covered.

'I must settle my centre of work as soon as possible. Makuta, five days from here, where Tom Comber was shot, is in my district. Kusakana, the Chief of the Tungwa (one of the Makuta towns), is very anxious for me to go there ; every few weeks I get a message, urging me to go. I tell him that when I have finished Luke I will go. He has eight

THE TRANSLATOR AT WORK.

DR. BENTLEY, NLEMVO, AND NEKAKA.

[Seated at the table is Wabela, a registry clerk.]

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boys for our school, when I can go to fetch them.'

Meanwhile the linguistic work was going on. The spirit in which he undertook the sacred work of Bible translation will be gathered from the following extracts from his own letters. Writing to Mr. Baynes, he calls it a 'great privilege, and a great responsibility,' but at the same time a work that will be very congenial.

To his father he writes about this same time that he had endeavoured to translate the Gospel of Luke in simple, interesting style, after the fashion of their own stories and idiom. 'I have found a life-work now, and if with it I can combine some itineration and preaching, it will be all I can desire in that way, if only God's blessing rests upon me and my work. I must do some walking about to keep well.'

He then pictures himself at his tasks. 'I have made a high desk for translation work, so that I shall stand and work. It is eight feet long, and I can have my lexicons, grammar, versions, &c., spread out, and walk about to each. Mr. Cameron's boy, Manwele, another very nice lad, recently baptized, is to help me as well as Nlemvo. Now, I have a nice lot of belongings about me, and we are beginning

to feel at home. It is the first time since I left England in the spring of '79, that I have been able to look at a place as home.'

To his colleague, Mr. P. Davies, he writes: 'As to the translation of the Lord's Prayer, there has been precious little criticism hitherto. I am glad to see the ball set rolling. It is the only guarantee of, and incentive to, careful work. I hope you will be on the look-out all round for such matters. In the translation of the Scriptures we soon come face to face with difficulties. Shall I be strictly literal or colloquial at any costs? The happy medium is the only safe one. How should we like a strictly literal English translation? I reckon we should not love to read our Bibles if they cost too much effort to understand. We had better strive after a careful translation in which, whatever we think of verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, we may try to catch the idea of the original words, and represent them as faithfully as possible.

'We must be careful that we properly understand our Congo words, subtle as they are, and that the still more subtle forms are correctly used. For instance, the words "Lembwa" and "Kondwa" both mean to lack, but in the case of the first, the idea is that a person never had what he is without. "Kondwa" implies previous

possession. We must be very careful to get the root idea.'

To some one who was unfamiliar with the word 'Nsamu' for 'grace' he writes: '"Nsamu" for "grace" has been used for three hundred years in that same sense." [1]

And again: 'As for the words used, you will not find that the boys, or any one, will know all the words, any more than you would find an illiterate person in England who tried to read the Bible for the first time. But that is not the fault of the translation, but of the matter to be translated. An intelligent native much used to talking palavers, and therefore well conversant with his language, ought not to find difficulty with many words.'

There were two or three points which caused considerable correspondence regarding the choice of rendering. For instance, the word 'brother.' There is no one word for 'brother' in Congo, as meaning the children of the same father and mother. Two words are used—one implying an elder brother, the other a younger member of the family; but both these words are also used of near relations in general.

The difficulty was felt especially when

[1] Proof of this may be found in the Catechism of which we had a copy from Lisbon. See p. 177.

speaking of 'the brethren of our Lord.' Having looked up the subject to the best of his ability, Mr. Bentley decided for the use of the word 'Mpangi' (elder brother or near relative), regarding them as children of Joseph by a previous wife, or possibly cousins.

The opinion of the colleagues was divided on the matter. To a suggestion that Mr. Bentley's view showed a leaning to Roman Catholicism, he replied with natural indignation: 'I do not reject our Lord's Divinity because the Pope, or the devils even, believe in it. If we throw overboard all the truths which the Church of Rome retains, we shall make shipwreck of our faith; but I am no more a Papist than you are. I believe as firmly as you do that Mary became the proper wife of Joseph, but it is hard to *prove* that she had any further children.'

Finally, he suggested that 'it would be best to lay the matter before two or three men in the denomination, such as Dr. Angus, whose answer will have weight.'

Another discussion arose about the word to be adopted for the 'Church,' the body of believers. About this he wrote:—

'"Nsa" seems the best word to express the idea of the Church of Christ. There is no institution here to represent the Greek *ecclesia*, but a

word that can be translated by "crowd," or "mob," certainly does not express the idea. The Church is more than a gathering, or crowd of people. The word "Nsa," *i.e., retinue of a Chief,* seems to be the one we want. Those who have been bought by Him, His followers; they belong to Him; they are His retinue, His people.'

Before finally passing the proofs of the New Testament through the press, he sent them to some of the colleagues for them to read and criticise. For, as he writes to one colleague: 'I am most anxious to get the work correct at all costs, and will allow no delicacy of feeling about the overhauling of my work to stand in the way. For me to refuse to take any mistakes out, or for others to insist on mistakes being put in, would be most serious for either of us.' The criticisms (which sometimes answered each other) were received with all thankfulness, and were carefully weighed.

The translation of the Epistles was certainly more difficult than the simple accounts of the Gospels. As he says, in a letter to Mr. Tymms on the first verse of 1 Corinthians:—

'The word "called" in the opening verse gave me a puzzler. We have no delightfully vague words in Congo. Everything is precise. I have finally adopted a word equivalent to "told off,"

or "called out of the ranks" to an apostleship, as a master appoints his several men to their several duties, and calls out one for a special duty. This may not be altogether satisfactory, but it is the best as yet found, and will fit in with all the usages of what has really become a technical term. Nlemvo has a marvellous fund of words. He has a very happy knack of hitting off ideas. Congo will take the Scriptures as well as English, I reckon. If it is weaker in some respects, it is stronger in others. The chief fault of the language is its preciseness.'

It was a great relief to Mr. Bentley when Mr. Davies undertook to transliterate all the Bible names according to a consistent plan, so that all Books might be uniform, and 'hideous "Congo-isations," such as "Malakosi" for "Mark," "Abalayami" for "Abraham," &c., be avoided.'

Dealing with the same subject, he said :—

'I should venture to enter a caveat against the very great amount of change which is proposed, . . . for I cannot for a moment think that the future generation of missionaries would care for these changes. In a powerfully short time the bushman element will have disappeared from the neighbourhood of our stations, and decent, well-trained boys, and other natives, will be in the habit of pronouncing all sorts of strange

names, and the need for inserted vowels will have disappeared. The system will then be discarded, and it will be regretted that such a system was ever in vogue.'

'As to the foreign letters, we found the Congos quite as well able to pronounce the letter "r" as most English people are. Why should we make Bible names more unrecognisable than our own? Those of the missionaries who had either "r," "h," or "c" in their names would hardly consent to alter the spelling of them; why, then, take these liberties with Bible names? The natives who know a smattering of Portuguese venture very bravely on the "r," and roll it heavily sometimes. "H" also appears once in the language, in a sort of interjection—"he" = very early morning—so that it is not an utterly foreign sound when used in the word "Abraham."

'In deference to the missionaries of the Swedish Missionary Union, the heavy sibilant which we represented as "j" before "i" was altered to "z," and "j" only appeared in the name of "Jisu" ("Jesus"). Seeing that that name had been known thus for three hundred years, we thought it unwise to alter its spelling.'[1]

[1] However, even this was conceded in the language conference of 1902 or 1903, in which the B.M.S. missionaries united with those of the American Baptist Missionary Union and the Swedish Missionary Union.

The question was also raised as to the necessity for closing every syllable with a vowel, but 'warned as we are,' wrote Mr. Bentley, 'by such men as Dr. Cust against making parodies of the Bible names or making wide differences, *unless absolutely necessary*, we decided that it would be best to make the least possible alteration from the sound of the original; that the insertion of the fancy vowels was unnecessary, confusing, and tending to absurdity. We teach geography, and the same difficulty occurs in that; we cannot attempt a wholesale doctoring of all maps.'

In later years, when the New Testament was actually in print, he wrote to a colleague, in regard to some criticism upon its style :—

'I am much gratified at your kind words about the New Testament. As to its being, perhaps, a bit too classic, there was no help for it. There is no half-way between white man's Congo and the classic, or rather the *cultured*, style. It is the actual language of the mass of the country, and the style is the style of the natives of Congo from San Salvador right away to Kinsuka, Makuta, and Luvituku, and to within four hours' from here, also of the Mbanza Nzundi district. My aim has been to approximate as closely as

possible to the Congo of an ordinary native. . . . All sorts of suggestions have been made. Some recommend that one dialect be adhered to, some another; others would like it to be simpler, more like State Congo, or the efforts of a new man out! But Dog-Congo is no earthly use for spiritual work; a man must put his best into it, for if the work is chaff it will be inevitably burnt up in the fires of future study and development. Persistence in mistakes only becomes a monument to a man's shame.'

The advice given to an Upper River man who was doing some translation reveals to us how Mr. Bentley himself worked:—

'Drive on, study hard, closely and carefully; avoid cranks and fads as hopelessly fatal, and eventually making one an object of ridicule. Endeavour to get at the little troubles, shutting your eyes at nothing, no matter how often it makes you pull your work to pieces and re-cast. You say, "I should nearly have accomplished the task by now if . . ." What a pity that you did not peg away and do it! Whether in the end your translation is to be printed or not, it is your duty to study the language, and to do your best to arrive at perfection, no matter whether your work is finally selected by your brethren or not. Do not be too exclusively local. The young folk

do not understand half the words of the fuller speech. I have far more words than any single native would know, and many words in the New Testament would not be understood by any one man, but they would by another, and again many that the second does not know, the first would. The fact is that sometimes one can supply the needed word, sometimes another. No one man's vocabulary is broad enough for all.

'As to your suggestion that I should put into writing for general use the principles adopted in the New Testament, I fear that I should place myself in a very difficult position in so doing. I shall always be happy to answer any questions, and render any possible service desired by my brethren; anything else might be resented as presumption on my part. To attempt to translate the New Testament in such a way that its meaning shall be at once apparent to an ignorant hearer, who hears for the first time, is a hopeless task. There are two widely different systems of translation—that of closely following the original and that of paraphrasing, but while the original can be followed too slavishly, and be the cause of unnecessary obscurity, the paraphrasing is a most dangerous course. We should soon be putting into it our own superficial and often incorrect notions. Such work as translation

is only to be undertaken with fear and trembling, and with great anxiety lest we dim the light which we should let shine. It is a great responsibility. For my own part, I labour to express as clearly as possible that which I find in the original. Often, in translating, you will find the chief difficulty in "preserving the ambiguity of the original," to quote a great phrase with Dr. Angus. In all knotty points I find it safest and best to follow the interpretation of the Revised Version. I would not pit my scholarship against that of the revisers. You will have seen ere this in "F.N." the position I take as to Scriptural and geographical names, for the two must go together. The tremendous changes suggested will, I am sure, be eventually regarded as a curious reflection on those who adopt them.'

Quite early Mr. Bentley laid down the principle that reading matter should, as far as possible, be paid for by the recipients. He felt that it would be hardly right to expect the B.M.S. to give everybody Bibles free.

'If we are going to give books away, who is to bear the expense? Why should we give away books any more than other things? Unless we can expect to sell the books, it is not much use to try to work up a literature for them, or

even translate the Bible or the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It will be making a wrong beginning to give away. When shall we be in a position to make a change? We want to teach the native Christians to support their Church and Church work. If folks do not begin now to pay a fair price for printing work, when will they? The people must learn to understand from the beginning that the books were made and printed *for their benefit*, and therefore they must pay for them. . . . The books needed as reading-books are entered in the school account, but any boy wishing to possess a book of his own has to make some return for it.'

At that time we only had afternoon school, and the work done in the morning between prayers and midday was a set-off in return for their 'chop,' wearing-cloth, &c. Those boys, therefore, who were desirous of possessing books had to work in their free time, in the morning before breakfast, each morning's work being reckoned equivalent to a certain small amount. Six of these currency, or six mornings' work, would be repaid by one book. Another book would be valued at twelve mornings. The price of a New Testament was thirty days' work. Some may think this hard, and it speaks well for the earnestness of the boys' desire to possess a New

Testament of their own that they were willing to work thirty mornings to have one, and no sooner did the Testaments arrive than there were very few boys who could read who did not possess one.

Chapter XV

Mission Policy and Personal Dealings

'*Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*'
MATT. X. 16.

FROM time to time questions of policy or administration, of more or less importance, came up for settlement. Their discussion in Mr. Bentley's letters is interesting. For the consideration of each helps to illustrate not only the conditions of missionary life, but also the necessity of having, in the missionaries, men capable of dealing with them.

And first as to some matters affecting the property of the B.M.S.

Shortly before Mr. Comber died there was an attempt on the part of the State to upset the old contract of perpetual tenure, with the suggestion that the same terms were to stand for all the stations, and no indemnity was to be sought if we were turned out for any reason. Mr. Bentley fancied that this was perhaps a deep-laid scheme with a view to obtaining some specially coveted

site, and strongly urged Mr. Comber to refuse, 'for,' he wrote, 'I think that such a concession as they wish us to make would be most unfair, holding, as we do, valid contracts imparting a perpetual tenure. They represented it as only a possibility, but it is more than that, why else do they press it? If we yield the point, they would, with little doubt, find they need one or other of our fine sites. At any rate, I shall agree to nothing which can affect our tenure, and I hope you will be most rigid on that point.'

Later on other Missionary Societies, realising the unique position of our beautiful site at Underhill, made requests to us to share it. Mr. Bentley felt it a duty to urge, in the interests of the B.M.S., that no portion of that site—which in time would probably greatly appreciate in value—should be alienated.

Questions of administration appear to have weighed on Mr. Comber, and drew from Mr. Bentley a very touching letter, in which he said :—

'Your letter to Biggs has indeed filled me with anxiety about you. You seem depressed, as well you may; death and trouble, anxiety and worry. By whatever name you call it, the office of Bishop is one which entails weariness and trial. We cannot fail to feel keenly these losses, but there

is no question as to our duty. The ranks must close up ; we must still struggle on. Don't be downhearted, my dear old Tom ; don't attempt impossibilities. If you were to collapse, I should be hopeless. With you I have no hesitation. Don't think that arranging things, and straightening up, and planning is not work for the Master. I do hope you will come up. A change on the steamer might set you up, and I should be glad to have a chance of a general consultation with you about things.'

Delicate and difficult tasks were sometimes laid upon Mr. Bentley as a senior missionary. To one he had to suggest a change of duty. Another was encouraged to throw himself into the study of the language. The colleague to whom this appeal was addressed became one of the most reliable authorities on the language.

During the time that Mr. Bentley was in charge of the 'Peace,' the State sent an order that our Mission steamer should fly the State flag. He therefore wrote to the Consul at Loanda as to the position of the State flag on the Missionary steamer : 'It is always difficult to convey to the natives a correct idea of the nature of our philanthropic work. It will be all the more difficult if we have to make our steamer appear as if it were a State vessel. If we are obliged

to fly the State flag as a compliment due, we might at least fly it forward ; to make a distinction between the State and ourselves. It must be a difficult and troublesome business to organise a proper Government ; in such a wild country some struggles and occasional bloodshed are almost inevitable, but as it appears from all the regulations, decrees, &c., which are being issued, that the State is going to push things with rigour and all despatch, we missionaries ought to keep distinct. I am sorry to trouble you, for, as a missionary, I should prefer to keep clear of all political matters, but past doings compel us to protect our steamer.' The Consul took the matter up, and some special arrangement was made.

Then came another question of relations with the Congo Free State. He wrote to the colleague in charge at Bolobo, warning him that the State was sending an expedition overland to the regions raided by the Arabs ; adding, ' They have a force of 1,200 men. They have a legal right to billet a good number of men upon you, and will very likely do something to show the natives that they can order, and even bully us, as well as them. Such lessons to the natives would be the best in the long run. We cannot object, and will have to put up quietly with it, just as we advise the natives

to do. You may be surprised at this, and wonder what we are coming to. I can only hope that you will have no more to complain of. No decent State can afford to wait until evangelistic work has reached its consummation, where such devilry exists, and if under such circumstances we protest too loudly we should have the sympathy of no one. Let us hope that the "Peace" will not be again seized. It is difficult to say what cannot be done under military law. We shall be very anxious for news from you, and shall not forget to remember you in your dangers and difficulties in our prayers. Relieve our suspense as soon as possible. It may be that you have heard the news of the Expedition, and all these reflections and possibilities have occurred to you; but in case you have not heard, it would be wrong of me not to send you warning.'

The composition of the missionary staff raised many problems, some of delicacy. Young missionaries were occasionally unwilling to believe in the necessity of the warnings as to care of personal health pressed on them by senior men, and Mr. Bentley begged that the importance of such care might be urged upon them. At another time he wrote:—

'Everything has impressed me with the importance of the widespread sowing of the

seed of the Kingdom. . . . I believe that more itineration would mean better health. I am always the better for an outing, but of course there must be a sufficient staff on the station; for instance, if there are only two men to do all the work of a large station, nothing can be done outside. There is a great deal which tends towards deterioration and enervation in this climate. If a man believes that these poor people are on the road to heaven without knowing it, he is not likely to tramp many weary miles in this climate to trouble to lead them by a little shorter route. A man needs strong convictions of a powerful motive force to enable him to do much out here.'

During Mr. Bentley's earlier work in the field there came to the front the question of more widely employing women as missionaries. Upon this he wrote: 'Single ladies would be indeed a great help to stations where there are or can be girls, and where there is a married lady. I do not mean to appeal for one directly. I should prefer to talk it over with you [Mr. Comber],—but I would vote for single ladies. I think it would be a good policy.

'As to the married ladies, when they arrive on their station, if they have any mettle or grace, they will seek out their work, but on no account

should they be expected to look after a lot of wild girls straight off, . . . for girls, unless well in hand, are far more trouble than boys. To have given any one the eleven Stanley Pool girls, *en masse*, would have been enough to kill her. I should say more than five to start with are too many. Not until these are well in hand should more be taken.

'In America the ladies are overhauled as thoroughly as the men, and in consequence the ladies are often better than the men, therefore, if a man who is engaged applies, his betrothed has to appear too. If a man has had decent health himself, and marries a bright, active woman, I should say his chance of life is much increased. I do not know how I should have struggled through my work, worry, and anxiety, especially of late, but for my wife. If a wife adds to a man's anxieties, how much does she lessen them! The result is a heavy minus rather than a plus. If a man can find the right woman, my advice would be very strongly in favour of missionaries marrying.'

The question of the scale of allowances to Congo missionaries called forth a characteristic letter, in which Mr. Bentley discussed with complete disinterestedness a rumour which had reached him. The subject was afterwards con-

sidered by him with his brother missionaries, and they were at one upon the matter. The work was their care; and questions of allowances were of quite minor importance. In the mind of Mr. Bentley himself the point uppermost was the necessity of additional helpers for the ever-extending work, and any financial re-arrangement could only be considered by him as it affected the possibility of re-inforcements.

Another, and entirely different question arose in regard to the relations between the Mission and natives, who, of their own free will, and for reasons of their own, came to settle near the missionaries. Inquiries were made as to the native towns growing up beside the station, and these drew from Mr. Bentley an interesting reminder of the influence a Mission exercises:

'They will be native towns growing near our station, in no way differing from an ordinary town, except that we should hope to have at first a larger proportion of Christian folk amongst their people.

'To build near us is no profession of faith, neither do we enter into any obligations whatever to support those who come to us. Out of the five first allotments here, two of the holders are members of the Church, a third is earnestly and seriously seeking the Saviour. Two others

are still in heathen darkness. One is the best shepherd we have ever had here. We are glad to have such a hopeful man amongst those settling near us. Since his relations have treated him very badly, he prefers to attach himself to Nlemvo, and build his home beside us.

'Another came from San Salvador to work for us here. As he has no relatives there nor any protector, he is afraid to return, for there he would be surely kidnapped and sold, so he prefers to build here. It is his only hope of maintaining his freedom. Near us there can be no serious oppression, near us is the nearest approach to security of property, so beside us here there will grow a native town; not a Mission town, but a native town. They do not build on our ground, and we have not the faintest right to object to their building on free soil, near enough to us for our presence to shame others from oppressing them.'

An interesting letter to a native convert in Gaboon was written when that convert had to face a position of some difficulty: 'I hope indeed that after the American Missionaries have done so much for the Mpongwe, your people will stand by them; that when the French try to hinder them, your people will

show their appreciation for this long kindness. It will be a lasting disgrace, reaching much further than any news of Gaboon has done as yet, if the many Gaboon people who have profited by the American Mission desert it at this time. If at such a time they go over to the French Mission, they may get what they choose, and get too much of it. You know something of what Roman Catholicism is; you know also who are teaching God's truth, and God's way of salvation to your people, and at this time, no one who knows what you know, will dare to hold his tongue if he has any love or fear of God in his heart, any thought of standing before the great white Throne. You have a chance now of showing what you are made of, and surely you will do so too.

'I urge you in this manner, Redombo, because I am anxious that you should turn out well, and because I hope that you will love, and truly and faithfully serve the Saviour and Master, of Whom you have learned so much. You cannot say that it is no palaver of yours, neither can you say that you can do nothing; you can and must, if you are worth anything.'

Mr. Bentley's position gave him frequent opportunities of helpful talks with white men who had visited our station. Very few, who

paid us more than a passing visit on the road, left without having heard from him the message of salvation.

To one he wrote: 'As to the matter of your letter. You will understand that I have been sorry to learn that your difficulty still remains too strong for you. At the same time I can assure you that you have my heartiest sympathy. I wonder if I have increased your difficulty by encouraging that reasonable thought of yours, that, so long as the one great obstacle remained, the way of access to God in prayer was blocked. To a certain extent it is true, and needs to be realised by you; but that you should be unable to put the evil away in your own strength in order to clear the way to prayer is really not surprising. I should advise you to tell God of your weakness and want of heart, and, assured as you must be of your own helplessness, to implore earnestly His help and strength. You can surely go to God in prayer, asking Him for strength of mind and heart to put away your sin from you. Be more frank with Him than you could think of being with me. Remember that you can hide nothing. Remember, too, that if you can go to Him with an earnest heart you can be sure of His most loving sympathy and help. I do not imagine that you question God's

attitude. You say you cannot go with all your heart, for you feel too indifferent. Well, then, go and tell that to the Heavenly Father, and see if He cannot and will not help you. If the only answer you get be an increased sense of your own helplessness and sinfulness and disgust of yourself, do not be discouraged by that, for it is no unusual thing for God, under such circumstances, to show you yet more of yourself, that the cure may be all the more radical and thorough. The sinfulness of our natures, and the baseness of our hearts, is far more terrible and far-reaching than any one can possibly imagine. The Apostle Paul in one of his letters (Eph. ii. 1–5) refers to the former condition of the Ephesian Christians as "dead in trespasses and sins." This is no figure of speech; what can be a more helpless, hopeless object than a dead man? And you are waking to the knowledge of the fact that you are in special matters as hopeless and helpless as a dead man. It is well that you should be raised to a consciousness of your terrible position, and the awful danger of the past and present.

'But let me urge you not to lose heart or to determine to push the matter no further. Bear this in mind—that the very fact of this realisation of your danger, and of your lost, hopeless

condition, is an evidence of the working of God's Spirit in your heart. This alone should lead you to hope in God's mercy. He is not playing with you, but has shown you this much to arouse within you a desire for His mercy, and willingness to avail yourself of it. He is more ready to help and save you, than you are to be helped and saved. The hitch really lies with you. It is a good thing for you that it lies there, and not with God. It is you who need to be reconciled to God, not God to you. God is long-suffering and wants us, and is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. If, then, you feel you are helpless, and ask the blessed Saviour to help you, will He refuse? It is impossible.

'To face again the great difficulty. We have not a Saviour who cannot understand our infirmities, but One who has been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. iv. 18). Since God Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted (Heb. ii. 18). He says: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect (shown in its perfection) in weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9). Again we are told "There hath no temptation taken you but such as can be borne." "God your Father will not suffer you to be

tempted beyond your ability, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. x. 13). Be assured that God can help you to put away the evil; know too that *only God* can help you, and is anxious to do so. If when our Lord told the paralytic man to get up and carry his bed, he had commenced to look at his withered arms and argue that he could not, and that it was useless to try, he might have remained in the state of paralysis until the day of his death. Jesus told him to get up, and he got up. Jesus calls you to put away the evil way, and to follow Him. Do so, without a long palaver, and agony of mind, as you reflect on your own helplessness. To parley and consider, and think again, is to be defeated. Do not sell your precious soul for such a low price. Accept the grace and strength offered to you. Do the deed, and trust the Lord to keep you, and complete His work until He shall present you in God's own Holy Presence, faultless.

'What to say more I do not know just now. Let me hear from you soon; do not hesitate to write to me. I have told none of the other fellows about these matters. I have had to keep your man until to-night to find time to write you quietly.'

There was no time in the day for such letters as these. They were taken from his precious nights. 'The daytime I consider as given up to translation,' he would say; but he was as ready to help any one who came to him at night in secret, as His Master had been to receive Nicodemus.

In the next letter, to a friend who had suffered much, we can read between the lines that he had learnt the lesson of meekness and forbearance through trial: '. . . I am sorry to note the tone of sadness which runs through the latter part of your letter. You evidently suffer much by the unkindness and unfairness of others. I must say that things of this kind do not upset me for any length of time, but for that I would take no credit. It is a matter of temperament. I cannot have any peace of mind as long as I brood over a wrong. I either make up my mind to put up with it and say nothing, or if I am too much "crowded" and obliged to speak out, I do so; and having made my protest, let the matter drop. . . . Besides, in other things I fail myself, and have my own weaknesses and follies, and have to hold my head very low in my Master's presence, that much dwelling on the faults of others suggests too many of my own. I find so much

"cussedness" in my own heart that I am not surprised at finding it in others.'

To a friend, with whom he had evidently spoken much on religious matters in his early years, before he left for Congo, he wrote: 'All I am anxious for is that you should arrive at the truth, not necessarily what I consider the truth, but what shall eventually turn out to be the truth. For either of us to miss it will be an irretrievable disaster. . . . I have just been translating the Gospel of John and am profoundly impressed by the utter truth-like consistency of His life, and the definiteness of Christ's claim to Divinity, and to be absolute as Teacher and Master. I wish you would read the Gospel through and make up your mind that if you feel you can safely take Him as Teacher and Master you will do so. You may consider that you are well acquainted with the whole ground, but what you saw from the eyes of eighteen will be very different from your advanced standpoint, with wider knowledge of the world and yourself. We are too liable to trust to our early impressions. I believe that a careful, inquiring reading of the Gospel would result in further light and development of opinion. It would not be a great task to such a reader as you. One other point, for I am anxious not to bore you. You are satisfied

that your present state of mind does not interfere with a good moral life. No one, I imagine, can point a finger at you on that score. But these people out here would say the same of themselves. Still they come terribly far short of what they ought to be, and what satisfies them is abominable to me, and would be to you ; so also the angels might turn up their noses at what may seem passable to your eyes, and I remember that our Lord says that there is no one who is good —that comes up to the mark. . . . Get something better than miserable negatives to trust to, old man, or a neutral state, whether for living or dying. Do not be vexed with me for saying so much ; what would you think of me if I said less ? '

To a friend who had been placed in a responsible position, he sent a warm defence of the missionary's calling : ' Positions of high authority and power are, in my mind, positions of great responsibility. We shall all of us have to give account one day, and our work will be all overhauled and subjected to a searching light. Then will come the question as to how far our interest went for good, and toward the establishing of the kingdom of Righteousness and Peace. To do all that you are likely to have to do, and preserve your integrity and simplicity of heart

and purpose, will need a great deal of grace. God has kept His servants in such positions, and can help and keep you. But it is only those who see and properly appreciate the dangers who have any chance of pulling safely through. I always find that dangers and difficulties do not melt if one ignores them, but when they are fully recognised and provided against, as a rule they can be overcome by pluck and perseverance. I know you will do your utmost to help the Missions. The C.M.S. has turned out fine men, and will do much for the territory if they have a free hand. I know well the weakness of missionaries, and how human they are; but so are Government officials. They each have special departments and each do very important work; but man against man, the missionary who gives his life and ALL to it, will make more of a mark than the official who serves his time. Without a particle of physical force behind him, the missionary has an immense influence in a country. Our District Commissioner wanted to make me Justice of the Peace over five hundred square miles the other day. Of course I declined it, for you cannot combine the missionary and gendarme, but it was a recognition of our influence and knowledge of the people and the country, and therefore pleased me.'

To an intimate young friend, who had suffered heavy pecuniary losses, he wrote in terms which speak of his own spiritual trials, as well as of those of his correspondent: 'I know the rush and bustle and strain of life often hinders me from such reading of God's Word and reflection, which are generally termed means of grace. You must be very different from the rest of us if your walk with God is so close, that He should not wish that it should be closer. . . . I often think that my heart grows cold, and that I need some sharp treatment. I get it, too, in some ways; but much less than I deserve, so it is in no pharisaical spirit that I suggest that this sore trial be accepted in the way of discipline. We know that the Lord disciplines those whom He loves; others He often lets severely alone. They prosper and get on, but no discipline, and no grace. That is the most awful thing that can happen to a man. See to it, then, that the things which need rectifying be rectified, and that in all your pressure, and worldly care, the spiritual life be not neglected. Better lose a few or even many pounds than one of your dear children; but how often it happens that nothing short of some crushing bereavement will bring Christian people into a right state! I have no suggestion to make as to what needs attention; indeed, I have only

inferred your spiritual difficulties from my own. . . . If this trial work in you the end which our Heavenly Father has in view, He will aid and bless you with such success or poverty as may be good for you and yours. . . . Let me know of your successes that I may rejoice with you in your joys, as well as sympathise with you, as I do now most heartily, in your troubles.'

Chapter XVI

Itinerating: Privileges and Perils

'*Here—while the night-winds round me sigh,*
And the stars burn bright in the midnight sky,
As I sit apart by the caverned stone,
Like Elijah at Horeb's cave alone,
And feel like a moth in the Mighty Hand
That spread the heavens and heaved the land—
A "still small voice" comes through the wild,
(Like a father consoling his fretful child),
Which banishes bitterness, wrath and fear,
Saying, "Man is distant but God is near!"'

PRINGLE.

'SOMEHOW it is telling, and influences and ideas and sayings are common amongst these people who, two years ago, were in the darkest heathenism.'

So Mr. Bentley wrote of itinerating work. Is it realised what such work, carried on in a country like Congo, means? Perhaps his own narratives will show its privileges as well as its dangers:—

'I had a week of itineration seven days ago, and was very pleased with my reception. The first Sunday I was at a place called Ndembo,

and found the people starting for a fight; . . . the man at whose house I rested after my arrival, was soon brought back with a slug in his liver. As soon as my probe passed beyond the ribs, I had to confess my inability to do anything further. He was suffering much when last I heard of him; fifteen people were wounded in that last day's fight.

'The previous Sunday I slept in a town where there were a number of carriers *en route* for the Pool. They came from a district eight hours from the station to the south, which I have visited two or three times, but not thoroughly worked. They came for a talk with me, and some two of them even resisted the allurements of a dance going on at another part of the town to listen to the life, teachings, and death of the Saviour. They were much interested, and one especially begged me without fail to visit his town and tell them more about Jesus there.

'We started for Tungwa and Makuta on July 9th, marching about eighteen miles; we came to the edge of the great plateau on which our station is situated, and looked down upon the lowlands, seven hundred feet below us. In the rainy season the view is very fine, and now there is a blue haze. Through this lowland the Congo

Railway is to pass. In the rainy season the low country is infested with elephants. They ravage the gardens, dig up the potatoes and manioc, knock down the palm-trees, and make themselves a plague to the people—thirty or forty, sometimes even a hundred elephants, in a herd, wandering long distances in a day. They do much havoc, and the natives travelling through the jungle may at any moment be surprised by the crashing of the trees, and long files of the great beasts on either side of them. We were happy to meet none of them. At several of the towns we found food scarce, and a piteous tale was told us of the ravages of the elephants. They are now a protected game, and a license costing £25 has to be obtained before a white man may shoot an elephant. The natives trap a few, but very few. Their guns are practically useless with elephants. In the afternoon of the 4th we reached Nsonia.

'At Kusakana's request, we stayed at Nsonia all Sunday. In the afternoon we had some nice talks with the people. They were very friendly, and delighted above all to see a white lady. The men would crowd round me and shake hands; then they told the womenfolk to shake hands with my wife. "Go; she is one of yourselves." The women were delighted; they

would say to the men, "You men have your white man; now we have our white woman. She is our woman, our friend!"

'It was not so in every town. Half an hour after one of the best receptions, we came to a town where the first man we met had a gun. He quickly took it from his shoulder and levelled it. The guide who was in front of me winced, and was on the point of turning back. However, after parleying, he led us through the town, but we could not stop there. The women bolted, and the men would only look at us from a distance.

'Our reception at Tungwa was very hearty. Every morning at seven I held a service; it was sometimes very well attended. After that I gave medicine, and then Binta, the son of the Chief who helped Mr. Comber, would come to carry my medicine-case, and off we would go to see the patients. First he would take me to one, then to another and another. It was generally twelve o'clock before we were back. After the midday meal Binta would sometimes come and say, "You did not see So-and-so when you gave medicine," and once more he would pilot me off, carrying the case. He is a fine, bright lad, and is very anxious to come to Wathen. As a rule it was fairly late in the afternoon before I could

sit down, and then I was generally tired. After a little time at charting out the district round our station, or reading or study, the table would be spread for our evening meal. Then we would have evening prayers with all who came. My wife superintended the purchase of food for ourselves and men, and chatted with the women, nursed their babies, and made many friends. She has been having such a spell of schooling on the station. There was an understanding that this stay at Tungwa was to be a holiday, but she set the most advanced boys who had come with us, to teach reading to the others, and herself started an alphabet class with the town boys. So we gave ourselves up altogether to the people.

'There was a great deal of sickness in the town. An important sub-Chief was very ill. They begged me to see him. I gave him some medicine, urged strongly the importance of some good fowl soup, and on no account to give him palm wine. In the afternoon he sent to say he was much better. The pain had stopped and he had had a good sleep. Would I send him some more medicine? I said he had had enough medicine for the day, and that I would see him in the morning.

'Somehow or other I did not see him for

three days. At last he sent for me. He was much worse, evidently sinking. The truth came out then that they had been dosing him with palm wine, which had done him much harm. They had said, "Poor fellow will die. Let him have as much palm wine as he can take down, and enjoy all he can of this world's joy. He must soon leave his palm-trees and wine." The poor man was very angry that his sickness was becoming serious, and all the previous day he had been demanding a witch palaver, so that the witch might be killed and his own life spared. I saw at once that I could do nothing. Food and nursing were his only chance, if any existed. When I told him so, he begged me to tell him frankly if I thought he would die. I told him it was very likely, and urged him to seek the forgiveness of his sins, for preparation of the great change. In his exhausted state it was not easy to explain to the heathen man the way of salvation; but after I had been talking to him awhile, he begged me to pray with him that he might know how to pray for himself. The people tell me that often during that day he murmured the prayer to himself. The man died during the night.

'The senior Chief was also ill. I was treating him daily, and after the death of the other Chief

I was all the more concerned; but at first he seemed to become worse and worse, and the sick man's friends took counsel that if he died they would shoot me. I did not know this till months had passed, but now it is no secret that they really did consider it. This rage at the death of a relative is something difficult for us to understand, and is the cause of great cruelties, but no one who knows these people would say that any conceivable folly or wickedness was impossible; we no longer wonder at anything.

'I found that he had eaten scarcely anything for a week, though I had urged fowl soup. He said he had no fowls. He had given me a fowl a day or two previously; and although I seldom did so, I had accepted it, feeling that my refusal of his gift in his sickness would be misunderstood. I went back to our house and sent him his own fowl back, with a message that if he had no fowls I certainly would not take his last. He soon sent it back by one of his wives, with another fowl to be cooked for him under my own eye. My wife made him a good soup from it. On the tenth day I told Kusakana we were going away; but he would not hear of it. At last I heard that he did not want me to go until the senior Chief was better. He was very anxious,

for if the Chief died the people would say that he, Kusakana, had brought me there to accomplish the death of the senior Chief. By the following night there was so much improvement that he consented to our departure.

'The rapid recovery of the Chief is the wonder and talk of the country, and I am better known as the white man who cured Don Daniel than as Bentele. When I went to see him he was not in a grateful mood, although he owned that I had cured him. "What a fuss you made! I had to eat a fowl, feed well; what strange things you white men are! Why did you not give me a present when you left? What a mean fellow you are!" My patience was so far exhausted that I did not visit him again, and told the other people why I did not. They said it was his fashion, and my surprise and dislike of such "fashion" was quite out of place. It is our "fashion" to be kind and courteous to everybody, give medicine to the sick, even take it to them, and have a pleasant word for every one, small and great, and generally to be very friendly. It is only our "fashion," a little "weakness" of ours, nothing to commend us, or call for gratitude, or any feeling, but a curious interest. It is rather hard sometimes to keep down the old Adam, when they coolly

treat every kindness as a matter of course, but missionaries have no business to allow the old Adam its way any more than other people, so we remember that we must not be weary in well-doing.

'Later on, when I went to Tungwa, I went to see him just as if nothing had happened. His heart was much less hard than before. No one in the town listened with more attentive earnestness. Neither was there any one who showed more interest. I do not think that his feelings are touched. That is not a distinguishing feature of these people; but whether touched or not, feelings have been quickened. He knows there is a judgment to come for which he is not prepared, and Christ has been presented to him.

'The second day at Tungwa I was walking in the town with Kusakana. I said to him, "Now I must go back to the house. I have a lamp to clean."

'"What! a lamp; what is it for?"

'"A lamp with which we make beautiful pictures come on a white sheet. It is no use to show such a thing here. It can only be seen at night, and every one would be frightened."

'His curiosity was aroused; he had never

heard of anything of the kind. He came to the house to see it. I cleaned it and showed it him, and told him there was nothing to be afraid of, but of course it would never do to show it here. He begged to have it shown that very evening. So the news went round the town. I found a place to hang the sheet, and as soon as it was dark the lamp was lit. A few gathered. I put a chromotrope on the screen. Then for ten minutes there was such a shouting and yelling! This brought a crowd of three hundred to four hundred together. After a few preliminary pictures, which sufficed to work off a good deal of superfluous energy, the people began to quiet down. For one and a half hours they sat quietly and intensely interested. I talked to them about the series of Old Testament pictures. I had to show them the New Testament pictures the next night to about five hundred, and again on the evening of the market-day to another three hundred, of whom many were strangers. It was a great opportunity to present the gospel to them. I had offered to exhibit at the second stage from Wathen, but was declined. Previously I had not been able to do much with the lantern on account of the timidity of the people. My wife and I stayed eleven days in the town, and a very interesting visit it has been.

'From Tungwa we went to Makuta. One afternoon I was strolling about the town. Seeing some women making pottery, I went over to them and sat down under the gables of the house, for the sun was hot. We soon changed the subject of conversation, although they were much interested in what I told them of making pots in England. Then we talked of the work at Tungwa, and how some there had learned of Jesus and were trusting in Him. I was speaking of the love of God, and how anxious He was to change our hearts and to fit us to go and live with Him in the Blessed Home above; how ready He was to help and bless all who sought Him, when the sister of one of the Tungwa lads who has been with us some time, and is now a member of the Church, spread out her hands and cried most pathetically, "Oh God! where are You, that I may know You?"

'My eyes fill up even now, somehow or other, as I think of her cry. We talked on for some time, and I tried to assure her that He was very near, and would hear her whenever she spoke to Him. Then we talked of Jesus and His great love, and the other women joined in, much interested, and wished that there was some one to teach them at Makuta.'[1]

[1] They now have a teacher.

'The Makuta market-place is a clearing about four hundred yards in circumference with a few bushes and some large trees of a species of ficus. There every four days the people meet from far and near towns; it is a noted market; much indiarubber and even ivory exchanges hands there; there is a large trade in salt. At some markets there may not be a hundred people, at others there will be as many as three thousand. Very near to the market there was gun-firing ahead. The battle was two miles away. We decided to walk on a bit before making definite plans. Presently the firing was only half a mile away, then even less, and as we halted an old lady came from the battlefield. She told us they were fighting just on the path. We had better go back and take another path to the east. She undertook to pilot us to the branch of the road.

'Presently some men came from her town to see us. They begged us to go to their town to sleep. It was too late to cross the plain; so we went to the town.

'Presently, when the sun went down, we saw a long file of men coming on the path. It was the home-coming of the warriors. The townsfolk rushed to hear the news. When the braves learned of our presence in the town, we were

honoured with an exhibition of their prowess at a knoll just below the town. There was firing of guns and striking of positions. Then they swarmed up the hill to see us. We shook the begrimed hands. Some had blackened their faces, some wore feathered caps, others had rigged themselves out in knightly style and wore rich and costly cloths. Some had even gone to the battle with parti-coloured umbrellas!

'The first question asked by the townsfolk was "How went the day? Has it been a good fight?"

'"Yes, indeed!"

'"No one killed on either side?"

'"No one. It has been a good fight indeed!"

'"That is how it should be."

'On another occasion we had been out for a week together. We intended to sleep the last night out at Masangi, three and a half hours from home. The Chief was dying; they insisted on my giving him medicine. It was an awkward predicament; they might say I had killed him. At eight o'clock at night the people became so excited that we thought it was time to clear out, and made a hurried departure. We had intended going to another town the next morning, and had told the townspeople this, but we could not well appear in a hitherto unvisited town long after

dark, so we went straight home. It was an awkward business for my wife. Her hammock-men were tired, and she had to walk practically all the way. We reached home at 12.45 that night. When the townsfolk found we had gone, they sent a lot of men with guns after us to the town we had meant to visit.'

Of another occasion he wrote: 'Just in from a Saturday to Monday itineration. Two hours' walk each day enabled me to do a circuit among the villages. At the place where I slept on Saturday the people have been very sullen and indifferent. The Chief Ndombe was not well, and sundry wives and relatives sat about on the ill-swept compound. I went to see him as usual. They asked me to give him some medicine. Others came to see, and I soon turned the conversation on gospel lines, and had the first really good audience in that place, which I have visited more than any other town because of its convenient position. The first time I went there to sleep I arrived in a tornado. No one wanted to take me in, but at last one young man, Dikizeye, received me, and since then we have been good friends. Still more so his elder brother, with whom I always put up now. They always come for a chat in the evening after the meal, and attend the evening prayer. This time Kimpewa, the

brother, was making a mat, and as he had sold it before it was quite finished, he was pushing on with the bordering in the light of my candle.

'After prayers, he had still half an hour's work, so we were left together. I would not take my candle away. When all had gone to rest Kimpewa said: "These are great things that you tell us." I advised him to accept personally the love and salvation of the kind Saviour; he said he had not learned enough yet. Every time we came he listened. I suggested that he might come to the station to hear more sometimes, and when he had learned enough and understood well, then he would give his heart to the Saviour. I want him to come as carrier on my Kinsuka Tungwa itineration. He thinks he will, but an elder brother of his died and is not yet buried, and that may hinder him.

'Next day I inquired about Mbengo, a village hidden away in the hills; I had never visited it. I learned that the approaches were bad. Therefore a young man from a town on the way came to pilot us through the difficult part, some quarter of an hour up the bed of a stream, the banks of which, 200 feet high, sloped away at an angle of about twenty degrees. I had long wondered what had become of his townsfolk. He told me that the latter had all died, and only he, with two

other young men and their wives, were left. That explained the absence of people from the village. He was a very decent young fellow and, in the little courtesy of showing me the road, we have made friends, and I have promised to sleep in his village to get to know him better. I had an attentive audience in the hidden village.

'From there I went to Nkaku, a wretched, unswept place, where the jungle grows thickly round the houses. They are very sullen and indifferent there. Most of the men were away. I found three or four only, but they had just come in from a town a mile away, and were tired and hungry and did not want to listen to me. Some women clustered near to the place where my boys were sitting, and said that, as the men were away, they could not listen, so I could do nothing there. I went on to Kitovolo and found not a man in the village, so there was again no audience. The wife of the man who always entertains me said that her husband was away, but, if I would allow her to finish her cooking, she would vacate the house as usual; so I had a cup of tea made, and laid down on a mat under some young palm-trees. In due course the remains of my midday meal were cleared away, and I had a talk with one of my boys who has been giving me a great deal of

trouble of late, and whom I had brought with me for the purpose of a *tête-à-tête*. Some of these little tours are very trying. I walk far, the sun is hot ; I get very weary over the hills and seem to accomplish little or nothing, but, as during this last trip, a little encouragement like that talk with Kimpewa, and the kindly manner of the folk in the out-of-the-way village, make up for the dead heathenism of others.

'In one town I went to I waited for a long time. No box or mat was sent for me to sit upon—a significant breach of courtesy—and it was evident that the Chief did not want to discuss any matter with me or listen to my message. On another occasion a Chief was unwilling to call the other Chiefs to hear what I had to tell him, and after a most unsatisfactory visit I left. When passing through the Belo of the sub-Chief they accosted me, and asked what business I had with their Head Chief. They were very annoyed that they had not been called to hear my message, so they asked me about it. This was just what I wanted, so we sat down and talked the matter over. They were still more vexed when they found that my proposal was to put an outpost in one of their towns, and that the Chief had just put me off without their being able to have a say in the matter. They had never heard anything

but good of us, and would very much like to have a teacher to teach all the children to read and write. As for the God's palaver, that was to them a matter of total indifference. There is so much jealousy and fierce hatred amongst these small townships that it is no wonder that Arabs and others make the country an easy prey.

'Leaving those Chiefs we went on to Tungwa. Just outside the town, we stopped for a minute or two for the boys to change their cloths. Four of them were Tungwa boys; two of them had not been home for a year. When all had donned their best we filed into the town, and very hearty was the welcome to us all. The return of the boys caused some excitement; they all looked so fat and well, such nice cloths they wore, and the little boy who had come to us five months before so thin and ill that they all feared he would never return, was now well and fleshy, and his skin was assuming a healthy black. On my previous visit I had not taken the boys with me, as they were in quarantine with a mild form of smallpox. Now they returned perfectly well, and every one was very satisfied and happy. I was disappointed with the town in some respects, for the novelty of the white man has worn off, as well as the curiosity and the interest in salvation.

Neither at our gatherings every morning and evening prayers, nor on Sunday, could I get the people to come in any decent numbers, and quiet talks with twos or threes was all I could do.'

One day Holman wanted to go to a town called Mputu. He had been asking about it. By and by when he gave the word to start, the guide led off in the wrong direction. Holman called him back and asked him where he was taking him to. That was not the way to Mbanza Mputu. 'Mbanza Mputu?' the guide asked. He appeared to have no conception of the town which he had been talking about; but he could not maintain that long, and then began to ask what they wanted to go there for. Next he protested that it was out of the way. The reply was that that was his business. To cut a long story short, it was only by Holman's insisting that he had made up his mind to visit that town, and was not going to pass it in this absurd way, that he got the guide and the boys to take him there.

'At the outskirts of the town the guide again proposed that we should not enter it, as my walking-stick was the only weapon we mustered. I went on as if there was nothing to be feared, so into the town we filed, and soon found the prin-

cipal men. The guide was profuse in his apologies for bringing the white men into their town, but I soon cut him short, and told him there was nothing to apologise for. I asked the man to send the women to cook some dumplings, and also bring some other food to sell, for I was going to have lunch with them, and have a talk before I passed on in the afternoon. The people were much amused at the fears of the guide, and were quite satisfied I meant no harm. They watched with much interest the construction of my travelling-table and gave orders for the cooking. Then, sitting down under the eaves of the house, the men came and sat round me while the women went to cook.

'They asked after Mr. Comber.

'"He is dead."

'"And Johnny?" (Mr. Hartland).

'"He is dead too."

'Then I told them how we had established ourselves right away in the far Bayansi. They wondered at the long distances and such energy, and wondered what on earth we had come for and what we were seeking. Could we not buy ivory and rubber on the coast? I assured them that what Vianga-Vianga had told them was perfectly true. We do not trade. We have gone into countries where, with an empty bottle,

we could have bought an ivory tusk; where the women pounded their cassavas with ivory pestles.

'"What have you come for, then?"

'Just what Vianga-Vianga told you. To tell you about the Saviour Jesus, how He died for you, and opened the way to salvation to all who believe in Him, whether black or white. It is no new story; it has long been heard in the country. You are behindhand; you know nothing much about it.

'"If that is your business, you will teach us, will you not?"

'"Certainly; that is what I have come for to-day."

'So I talked to them while I took my lunch. Then, when that was over, the women came with the dumplings which I bought and gave to the carriers, and then, with an increased audience, I told them of the love of Jesus and His work, until the carriers had finished their meal and all was ready for the start again. They listened quietly and with much interest.

'It was often round the fires that I had the best talks. Over the fire the people complimented me on my nice quiet ways. I had not gone making trouble by visiting in all the towns round—every African town has feuds with its

neighbours—and no one need be afraid of having such friendly white folks to live with them.'

A few weeks later we went on another little itinerary together. The people were much amused to find us travelling in company. The reason was explained in a letter home :—'It is a most bewildering thing to these people to see a woman sit at table, and eat with her husband as his equal—respected, cared for, and honoured. They have much to say about it; indeed, it is very amusing to hear their remarks and the questions they ask. How much dowry did I pay for her? When I tell them that sometimes parents hand over a handsome dowry with a bride, they were convulsed with laughter at the idea, and considered that white folk must be a very innocent, simple-hearted lot. Some time ago I was strolling with my wife through Ngombe, and we sat down to talk to the women in a compound; they had a number of questions to ask, and were very curious as to why I was content to have only one wife. They insisted that it was far better to have a good number; why, if a man had only one wife, he would have only one woman to cry over him when he died! One might as well be a slave and have a pauper funeral!'

We used to take our meals under a shady tree rather than in the small native houses (for we did not burden ourselves with a tent), and there in public would undergo their criticism. The men would chaff the women, and the women the men, over these subversive customs of ours and comment as freely as if we did not understand a word.

'Sometimes my wife would carve, and sometimes I did, the result being that they became quite confused as to which was head and master, and as to which had the right to divide the food, and what proportion fell to each. In the evenings my wife would go into the women's houses also and talk to them as they cooked, and I would join the men round their fires. So we mixed with the people and made ourselves at home with them; our daily life and behaviour closely scrutinised. Any little acts of kindness or attention were most carefully noted. They have come to the conclusion that we white folk love and respect our wives, and sometimes they remark, "You know how to marry," meaning, of course, that we know how a wife should be treated, and that our customs are the best.

'We had intended to have visited the large township of Nzundu. Messrs. Cameron and Comber had been there about two months pre-

viously, but the people were very cold. I hoped that a few days spent there with my wife would put us on a better footing. But when we reached Kibula, a town only an hour from Nzundu, the nephew of one of the Chiefs came with some companions to say that the old Chief of the township was dead, and was not yet buried, and they did not wish us to visit them. We told them that we meant no evil or violence, and the presence of my wife should assure them of that; but they told us that we went further at our peril; they did not want to have any dealings with the State or any one, and they begged us to let them alone. It was no use to explain or talk; they were sent to stop us, and we had better turn back quietly and make no trouble, so there was nothing for it but to return. There are hundreds of towns which would be glad of a visit; why should we force ourselves upon Nzundu? A little patience, and they too will come to know us.

'That afternoon, as we continued our journey homewards, we came to a town Nsala; guns firing, dancing, and ivory horns announced to the world that a funeral was being celebrated. That town had never been visited before, and as we entered the wood which surrounds every respectable old town the old Chiefs of the district came

out to beg us to make a detour round the outskirts of the town, instead of passing through it, because of the funeral. We, of course, complied, and they led the way. We soon had a great number following, and presently they begged us to be seated under the eaves of a house. A great crowd surrounded us, every one shouting and talking and laughing; pleased that such a pageant should have been added to their funeral festivities.

'There had been a great deal of feasting and palm wine; they had just stopped their dance to come and see us. The old Chiefs were very anxious for us to move on after a few minutes for rest and inspection. I wished to speak, but there was far too much excitement and good-humoured shouting and noise. It was evident we had better seek some more favourable opportunity. By and by, to the immense relief of the old Chiefs, we "moved on" to a town twenty minutes distant, where we were fortunately allowed to stay the night.

'One day a heavy shower of rain drove me into a town for shelter. It was half a mile off the road, and I had not intended to go to it at all. I was anxious to go on another hour and a half because of the bad roads next day, which would mean small progress. But I often find that these

providences accomplish some good end, and as we hurried into Kiulu for shelter I felt curious what might come out of it. I had been very anxious to get some boys from the town, but had never been able to do so. They were always shy folk, and, before I visited them, used to bluster that if I did come to their town they would shoot me. When the storm was over I was called to see a sick man; by that time it was too late to permit of a fresh start that day. While in his house I expressed my regret that we had had no boys from their town, and they had no one who could recognise and treat a common ailment like this fever of his. Still less had they any one to tell them of the life to come and of Jesus their Saviour. Several of the principal men were present, and they replied that my remarks were correct, and that they had determined themselves to send two boys to us.'

Itineration always had its dangers. Even after Mr. Bentley had travelled about the country for so many years that he was well known everywhere, and could write that 'It would be hard to find a place of any size or trading activity where no one had heard the Gospel,' he still needed to be wary, and more than once, even of late years, he had had to leave a town at a moment's notice to save his life, without accom-

plishing what he had intended. Here is an example of this :—

'After lunch, while the boys were clearing away the things, I went into some houses near by to give some medicine. Just as I was giving the last words of counsel, after I had gone away I heard a man shouting and vowing dreadful things. The women rushed away. The men stood up and some went away. Surprised, I asked what was the matter, and noticed a man whom we had just passed on the road going away in an excited manner.

'"Oh! it is Kianda. He is drunk; go away as quickly as you can. He has gone to get his gun. What a shame it is! Such a nice, kind white man, too. Just been teaching us about God, and giving medicine to the sick. What does he want to shoot him for? Go, white man, go away as quickly as you can; we will help you."

'I scarcely realised the danger at once, although I had not a weapon of any kind. I told them to go and tell the fellow who I was.

'"It is no use talking to the fool; he is drunk; he has gone to get his gun."

'"Take it away from him. Shut him up in his house; tie him up; anything you like. Are you going to let him shoot me in cold blood before your eyes?"

'"Please go away quickly! We will lead you out of the town another way. Be quick!"

'This was a miserable business. It was evident that no one would move a finger or face for my sake a drunken man with a gun. There was great shouting at the other end of the town, and people begged me to go away. My boys were in a great fright. In their hurry they could not cram all the things into the canteen, and a lot of things lay upon the ground. We bundled them into the hammock. One friendly native took up one thing and another another, and so they led us out of the town.

'It was a large town. I thought we should never get out of it; I told the boys to go as quickly as they could; no running, scattering, or breaking the file. This they did. At every house there were demonstrations of regret and apology. The women and men followed wringing their hands and unfeignedly sorry, but helpless. No one volunteered to quiet the drunken fellow.

'Clear of the town, we crossed a gulley where they begged me to stop and buy food. My barter box was far ahead, so a native rushed ahead to try and stop them, and only just succeeded in doing so; there we bought the food. It was good of the people to carry it after us, but

they said, "Your boys are hungry." It was quickly bought and eaten, the canteen packed, and, with many regrets and apologies, the friendly natives returned. I felt half ashamed of the bolt, and yet what else could I have done? One drunken man was the terror of the town. This is thoroughly African.

'We were obliged to leave the town by the road we did, and for three hours we had to force a way along an unused path across which the jungle was tightly matted. It was often difficult to tell where the road was, for it was obliterated by the tangle of eight-feet grass. The road wound about in a valley between two rows of the great limestone rocks already described. The scenery was grand, and often I rolled down, caught in the jungle, as I looked up at the beautiful rocks. For two and a half hours I forced the road myself, for the carriers were all loaded and could not go so quickly, and the guide was also behind. When at last he did come up to relieve me, I was glad very soon to reassume the forcing myself, for he had brought a gun with him, and every minute I feared that it would go off. At five o'clock we sighted across the plain the trees of a small town, which we entered at sundown, just in time to obtain fire and water for the night, and thankful that we had not been

benighted in that awful jungle; that we had not come across any elephants, and, above all, that we had been so graciously helped out of our danger. I was absent from Wathen for thirty-one days that time.'

Chapter XVII

Progress, Encouragement, and Trials

'*All common things, each day's events,*
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

We have not wings, we cannot soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb,
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.'

LONGFELLOW.

FOR some reason or other my own journey back to the Congo was delayed. Unfortunately, the mails arrived later than usual that month at Wathen, not in time to prevent my husband coming down country to meet me at the coast. It was a great disappointment for him to find he had made a false start. But once more he made the best of a bad business, and, finding that it was no use for him to go down to Banana for another three weeks' time, he crossed the River and visited his old friends at Manyanga. They were pleased to see him

again, and chided him for the abandonment of the station.

The absence of Messrs. Davis, Cameron, and Comber at home in England at the same time involved Mr. Bentley in much station work—palavers, transport business, and correspondence. This, with the necessary visitation and itineration, made the translation work one of constant interruption; so that there was very little to show for the time. 'It was very rare,' he says, 'that I ceased actual work before nine o'clock at night; far oftener it would be ten or eleven. My helper, Nlemvo, with whom neither lad nor man can be in any way compared, after his ten years of training, warns me that with a wife and little one he must be thinking some day of settling down permanently amongst his own people, who are living in heathen darkness and about whom he is very anxious. He and all my brethren urge me to push on; life is short and uncertain, and I am intensely anxious to be left alone to get on with translation work, of which there is such a crying need just now. In three or four years I shall have to take a turn to England, I suppose. I should like by that time to have completed and revised the New Testament. That done, a literary style in Congo would be set, and I can push on with the

Old Testament later on. For these reasons I desire to have absolute freedom from station routine, and take only such evangelistic work as can be done from Saturday to Monday, either on the station or on an ordinary itinerary in the district, for my own bodily and spiritual health and encouragement.'

After Mr. Slade's death Mr. Bentley and Mr. Oram were assisted for a short time in the general overlooking of the station affairs by Mr. Roger Casement, who, later on, became Her Majesty's Consul for the country. But still Mr. Bentley's hands seemed no less full than ever. Scenes like the following were typical: 'Even now as I write my window is full of heads of people from a town which is just opening up to us; they want to be vaccinated. They have brought us a new boy. I have given our most friendly Chief a picture-book to look at to keep him quiet. Now he has something to talk about for a little while. I cannot be offhand with any of these people. We must be gentle and patient and kind to all. A little coldness does a lot of harm; they cannot understand what being busy is.'

At this time he was a good deal occupied in helping his old friend Makito under interesting circumstances.

Photo] [*Albert Hester.*

DON ZWAU M. D. NLEMVO.

ONE OF DR. BENTLEY'S EARLIEST BOYS, AFTERWARDS HIS ASSISTANT TRANSLATOR.

[*During his last visit to England the cold affected his eyes, and he is now entirely blind.*]

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'There is a good probability of Makito building close to the station. The State has been full of the wildest and absurdest fears about him. I am going to talk it over with M. Vangele and try to settle things. Makito says his ivory trade has failed; he cannot make any profit. "We must turn to something else. We must have schools; if I was younger I, too, would learn." They want to give him *Nkasa* (the poison) as a witch, but he refuses; and no one dares to make him take it; but he assures me that what with his worry with the people and his terror of a night-surprise from the State, he can scarcely sleep at all. He is in a very unhappy state and wants to build beside us. . . . He is much impressed with the character and *noblesse* of Nlemvo, Mantu, and Manwele, so eminently superior to any of his folk. Lutunu he considers a great failure,[1] but cannot understand what makes such a difference. This is a wonderful change of attitude on Makito's part, not a change of mind, for he has long been our most determined friend. He reckons that education is the thing needed now that trade has failed.

'The State wants Makito to go to Boma, and attributes his unwillingness to go to defiance.

[1] This was written in 1889. Since then Lutunu has professed Christianity.

But if he went the other jealous Chiefs would burn his town, for they rightly fear that he would be made head of all the district. He cannot go, therefore, and the State cannot understand it. I can explain it to the Commissionaire and Governor when I go down, but until then it is hardly safe for him to move. When he does build it will be a very large town, for many people of other towns want to join him; but we must go carefully to work and seek Divine guidance. The greatest difficulty will be to manage it without the State thinking we are intriguing against them.'

It was for reasons such as these, and to be above suspicion, that Mr. Bentley was specially careful not to allow the boys to be taught any English. More than once the State officers tried to find out whether we were anglicising the people at all, or teaching them English. On one occasion they spoke to a girl on our station in English, and thought they had found something against us when she replied; but she was a mulatto girl whom I had met with in England and taken with me to Congo to be my servant there. They found that she was the only one on our station besides Nlemvo who could really speak English, although we could not help a few of the more intelligent boys picking up little short sentences

from us. From the time of the Treaty of Berlin Mr. Bentley stuck loyally to his principle of honouring the language of the State in whose territory he lived, and would allow no English to be spoken by natives in his hearing, nor would he agree to its being taught on the station. He was fully convinced of the necessity that all who joined the Congo Mission should be able to speak French.

When he went down to the coast to meet me he took with him some Bibles, Testaments, Gospels, &c., in English, French, Dutch, German, Portuguese, Flemish, and Italian, in a neat, well-made case of red-wood, which he begged the manager of the hotel at Banana to allow him to put up on the wall of the hotel. The agent at first demurred, fearing that they might be destroyed in some drunken revel. The Scriptures were all very well for ignorant folk, but not for such as frequent the hotel, nor was the hotel the place for such books. However, the permission was finally granted and the case put up. In the fly-leaf of each book Mr. Bentley wrote in the language of that particular volume, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' A notice was written on a thin strip of ivory requesting that the Bibles should be put back after being read, but leave

was given to all to 'take a Gospel,' if they liked.

At last, on June 30th, his long trial of patience was ended. At one o'clock the 'San Thomé' reached Banana. Holman saw my flag a good way off and said some pretty things about its putting new life into him! Soon after reaching home he wrote to his parents:—

'We have reached home safe and sound, after a capital journey of nearly nine days. Delightful weather, so that Margo could do a good deal of walking every day. There was so much to talk about that we enjoyed this very much. Very thankful we are for all God's mercies that have been multiplied to us, and very thankful I am to have my dear Margo back and to hear from her of you all. The house is not yet ready for her; patience is ever the word out here.

'Last Sunday Margo went out with me for a week-end itineration. We received a very enthusiastic reception; the women are so pleased to see her. "Our woman, our mother, our friend!" were the alternative cries for some minutes. They were very excited; some one had come to them, and *for them*—the women-folk. There is plenty for her to do out here, if only we have good hammock-carriers to take her about.

'Since Mr. Davies' arrival one of us has been almost constantly out, and it is our hope that we shall now have a spell of quiet, regular, and systematic work in this station. I am pushing on with my revision of Luke, and hope soon to have finished it. The first nine chapters have been sent to Underhill Station to be printed. Margo is transcribing it for me on the typewriter, so that things are moving on quickly.'

According to Holman's request, I had taken out with me a telegraph apparatus, which had been paid for by some friends. Soon after my arrival he set this up, connecting it with one of the other houses in order that the boys might practise telegraphy, and so fit themselves for taking posts at the various railway stations later on.

There is a tendency about the State officials, who care nothing for our evangelistic work, to regard us as rather a useless lot of folk. When the Governor, on passing through our station, saw the telegraph, he called it a capital idea, and seemed to think that some good might come out of the Mission if we were to turn out some decent telegraphists. Unfortunately, we never got so far as that, because the only two boys who were then sharp enough to be taught said, 'Why should we learn telegraphy?

We do not want to go to the State stations; we want to stay with you.'

It was not long before our Christians had the truth of our Lord's foretellings, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation,' brought home to them. In 1890 I find the following record of the first native martyr amongst our people: 'A native of Vunda near here who has lately been professing Christ, and doing what he could to speak for Him, has without doubt been murdered in Kimbenza because he tried to teach; so the first convert here has died for his faith.'

In July, 1891, he has to tell of the opening of our first evangelist outpost school at Kinsuka, a township about half-way between Wathen and San Salvador:—

'I had visited it twice before; once with my wife. They had been suffering terribly from smallpox, and it was even then in some parts of the town. I had some boys with me who had been recently vaccinated, and was able to vaccinate a number of them. I left my lancet there with Mwana Ngonde ("Child of the Moon"). They had lost altogether about 750 people by the disease, and of the great crowd which assembled when I first passed through, only a bare remnant was left. I was much struck with Mwana Ngonde. He is not the Head

Chief, but is a most superior man, not in the least like the ordinary run of people or even Chiefs. I had a long talk with him. He listened with much interest. Twice while Mr. Harvey (of the A.B.M.U.) was at Kimpese did Mwana Ngonde visit him. He said he liked to hear what we taught him. So we spent an evening in his town. He thinks occasional visits are not enough: "We black people forget so soon. We want to be told the same thing over and over again. Then when we have heard it often, we can begin to take hold of it. We want resident teachers, and many of them, for we are many."'

There was, however, only one member of the Church at Wathen available and fit to start an outpost—Lo, who had been Mr. Davies' personal boy, and had been taken by him to England. The little Church here readily took the matter up, and Lo was willing to undertake the work. They voted him an allowance of one hundred brass rods a month, and although that was only about two-thirds of what he was actually receiving from the B.M.S. for work on the station as assistant school teacher and carpenter, he was ready to resign his position and undertake this work at a lower allowance.

About this time Mr. Bentley was much cheered in noting the difference between the then state of

things and that of three years before. Here is one example reported by him: 'A week or two ago one of the lads had started a hymn in the boys' house, which was at once taken up by the others, for they are very fond of singing.

'When they had finished, one of the big boys, about sixteen, said, "Look here, you fellows, I have something to tell you. In the town I used to be a very bad lot, and was much disliked in consequence. I was bad even among the bad ones; a great thief"—and then he mentioned a black catalogue of wickedness—"but since I have been here I have learned enough to show me that hell was the only end of my course. I became very anxious and full of fear, and talked to Mr. Davies, and with the Church members. When we were on the road a week or two ago from Underhill, I was very miserable the day we started. All the way I was anxious and talked with the members of the Church who were with us. Now I know that Jesus has taken away and pardoned my sins, and I have happiness in my heart. I know that the Holy Spirit will take away the evil out of my heart and make me holy. If we are ashamed of confessing Christ before men, He will be ashamed of us when He comes in His glory, so I want to acknowledge before you all what Jesus has

done for me, that you may know what He can do for you."'

The boys hold prayer-meetings among themselves, and Church members give addresses, but this particular form of testimony was new, quite an idea of the one who spoke.

Yet savagery still held its sway amongst the people as yet untouched :—

'Some months ago Mr. Cameron was in a town and learned that the father of one of our boys was just dead. He expressed the hope that they would not kill any one else over the business, and the people assured him that nothing of the kind would be thought of. He had scarcely returned to the station before they took one of the dead Chief s wives, and without even the decency of a witch-doctor's divination, they accused her of witchcraft, and killed her at once. The State authorities soon heard of it, and an officer with thirty men went to demand the murderer. The officer had anticipated no resistance, and had only given his men ten rounds of ammunition each, but the natives attacked him, and chased him for an hour. He eventually came to our station, much exhausted. He left a day or two after, and camped about one and a half hours away, so that we might be in no way

mixed up in a military expedition. We did our best to induce the people to apologise and come to terms with the State, and happily the whole affair was compromised by the surrender of the murderer of the woman, and absolute submission.'

One day we had a visit from the Governor, Wahis. He arrived early one day and left at two o'clock the next. His Excellency visited the school and inspected copy-books and the sums on the slates, and heard the reading, and was much interested in noticing the progress made. He remarked that if the lads pushed on well, there were many good posts which they might occupy in the service of the State. Native clerks and telegraphists could not lack employment in the future. Mr. Bentley told him that while it was to be hoped that from the school there would proceed boys prepared and able to render such service, our highest aim and chief desire was to turn out those who would distinguish themselves as teachers of their ignorant fellow-men on the lines of Lo at Kinsuka. Clerks would be useful, but good teachers would be a still greater blessing to their fellows, and to the State. A hundred teachers would be a much better result than a hundred clerks.

This was a phase and possibility of Mission

work which seemed new to the Governor. He referred to it again in a manner which showed that he was much impressed with the idea. He visited the printing office, attended our morning service, and expressed himself as highly pleased with all he saw. He realised that a great deal of energy was being put out, and that there was every reason to anticipate results which from his standpoint as Chief Officer of the State he knew would be of great importance to the State as well as to the natives.

Mr. Bentley introduced to His Excellency the subject of placing the delimitation of the region, beyond which the importation of alcohol was illegal to the natives, much nearer to the Lower River, and suggested that instead of the Nzadi a Nkisi (three hours east of Wathen) being the limit as it used to be, the Mpozo River between Underhill and Mpalabala should be the limit. They discussed the influence of alcoholic liquors on the natives, and the Governor deplored the disastrous effects on the Pacific Islanders. He regarded the suggestion, which was a new one to him, as of importance, and undertook to submit the matter to the Central Government.' [1]

[1] The suggestion has been adopted, and no alcohol may be imported beyond the limit of the Mpozo River.

Developments at Wathen included the increased use of the school, the true place of which Mr. Bentley fully understood: 'We, of course, consider the proclamation of the Gospel our first duty, but school work is of great importance. The knowledge of the three "R's" does not mean a change of heart, but we can reasonably hope that God will send to us among our children those of whom He can make good use in the evangelisation of this country in the future. It is His way of working, and we can but expect such to happen. Many will drift back to the towns, and earn their living as natives generally, but the best we hope to see develop into teachers, pastors, and evangelists, for no one could dream of a handful of white men sufficing for this vast continent. We have now five girls and thirty-nine boys in the school, beside three workmen who drop a dollar of their pay to make up for the time they are in school.'

'At present school is being held in a small corrugated iron store, which used to be at Lukunga, but was no longer wanted there, but we are thinking now of erecting a dormitory and schoolroom to accommodate 120 boys. We shall make it with a hip roof at one end, but a gable at the other, so that we may in a few years add another dormitory for advanced

Photo] [*Rev. J. R. M. Stephens.*

SCHOOL CHAPEL, WATHEN.

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students; some day perhaps we may use the whole building as a college, the preparatory work being mostly done in the towns by native teachers. So we are already dreaming of the Wathen University! The colleagues who are in charge of the food department fear that we shall not be able to get a sufficient supply of native food, but if this matter is of the Lord, He will supply all our need.'

The first step toward the realising of this dream was a letter in the autumn of 1890 to Sir Charles Wathen, Mayor of Bristol, to whom Mr. Bentley explained the methods we had been pursuing, with their results so far, and our prospects for the future, asking him whether he would like to give the new building to the station that bore his name. Sir Charles generously replied by sending £500, which was the sum estimated to be necessary, suggesting that the plans should be sent to a Bristol firm, which was accordingly done.

During the spring of that year Mr. Bentley was kept from his usual itineration by my passing through a succession of attacks of hæmaturic fever.

Toward the end of March, when the bad symptoms had again returned, Holman wrote to Dr. Sims to ask for advice. At first, when

recommended to do this, he thought it useless. Fevers of this type are generally quick ones; by the time the messenger reached the Pool I should be either well again or dead. However, as the hæmaturia kept on returning, he wrote at last. Dr. Sims replied that there was nothing else to be done than what we had been doing, but he told Mr. Bentley that I must return to Europe immediately. I was, however, too weak to travel.

His own health was also suffering from the strain of constant work. In February, 1891, he found that his own energy was running out, and wrote home that he had to take very much extra care. 'If I overstep ten any night, I am seedy the next day, and can only work by force of will. Itineration taxes me much more than such work should. Two hours' walk out on Saturday afternoons is the most I can do, so that when I am obliged to go farther I am compelled to take a hammock for the extra; and even two hours hammock, plus two hours on foot, is too much sometimes. I generally feel better after a sleep, but I do not like to pass the mark. The fact is, I have not nearly as much bodily energy as I should have. Another reason urges itself: if I am not back from my furlough in 1893, my colleagues will be hindered, and their times must be considered, so that we may

not be away too many at a time. Next year I shall have been out five and a half years. If the Committee have no objection, therefore, I should like to leave the Congo next spring for a spell in England. I cannot possibly think of coming earlier, unless something very serious happens. I am exceedingly anxious to push on with the translations of the Epistles of Paul before I go home. I am getting on much faster now, having a better knowledge of the Greek through the work already accomplished. I hope to do some good work in the months remaining, as well as get ready for the press the Appendix of the Dictionary. I must take extra care and have extra help in my itineration, that, so avoiding exhaustion, I may be able to drive on to the next dry season. To leave sooner would upset my work very seriously. This diminution of strength has been so gradual and imperceptible that not until lately has it begun to force itself upon my attention, and, even now, only to an extent to make me take special precautions.'

But although he felt his strength failing, he did not slacken off work; indeed, in March that year he started a monthly magazine, which was printed by the station boys, under his direction and supervision. The little magazine

was called *Se Kukianga* (*The Dawn is Breaking*). His reasons for starting this will be seen in the following letter to one of the San Salvador colleagues.

'I am now wishing to start my magazine. Will you try to get me some useful articles from some of the best boys? Good country stories, natural history, anything that would interest would be accepted; Bible stories, accounts of Christian work, translations, and books intended for proper printing later on might appear in the magazine, and be cut from it, and pasted together for reprinting later on. In this way geographical articles could be collated into a geography book, astronomical articles be some day brought together in a book on the stars. I want as much good native writing as possible. It would add to the interest as well as develop powers. Of course, anything which you or Phillips will write will be gladly accepted. Country customs might be discussed and criticised, advertisements of native work, translations of good English articles out of English magazines; there is a wide field. New hymns could also be thus circulated.'

In the summer of 1891 there was a suggestion from the Home Committee that there should be a local Committee of Management for the Mission.

Mr. Bentley saw some of the difficulties involved, but to Mr. Grenfell he wrote: 'You speak of rocks ahead. I do not know what actual rocks you mean, but am sure that they will come. After all, however, it should be our chief concern that we are found faithful, and if there come laxities which we cannot correct, it will be a cause for regret, but not of censure for us. As for myself, I wish much that I could resign the senior brothership, and have nothing to do with any one, just drive on with my own work; but the Mission is too dear to me to allow it to drift anywhere.'

To Mr. Baynes he expressed his pleasure that some definite scheme had been adopted, and one as likely to work well as any. 'But,' he adds, 'I do not think the Committee will often meet; travelling here is so difficult,' and he further requests that men of judgment shall be put on to this Committee, and on no account one who has not been out at least three years.

In this same letter he suggested to Mr. Baynes the establishment of another station in Zombo, a Congo-speaking territory in a district where Congo is well understood and the differences are only dialectic. Some nine days to the south of us lay a populous district, which he proposed to

visit with Mr. Percy Comber. 'We are doing our best,' he says, 'to make a literature in Congo, but its use will be narrowed much if we have only two stations in Congo-land, while there is a large district quite out of our reach in which the language is well known and actually spoken. With such difficulties of communication, how can we do very much from this station for districts more than a hundred miles away? I have just come in from my itineration. Have been about eighty miles from Wathen, but what can be done for those so far away? One visit per annum, perhaps two later on, and a resident teacher, but what about superintendence? I have my translation work, which ties me, but to visit the towns and villages sixty or seventy miles away, work the whole district effectively, and superintend the teaching and evangelistic work is about as much as our present staff can manage for many a long day. That is to say, if I take up, besides my translation work, seven hundred square miles, and the other missionaries here a thousand square miles each, we shall not be able to organise and effectively work much more. In the accompanying map I have made sundry red spots, to give a rough idea of what we suggest. It is that, as soon as possible, we should establish two missionaries at some

good point in Zombo. . . . I trust, then, that the Committee will keep this proposal before them, and that, while they advise generous things for the far Soudan, they will not forget a region 1,500 miles nearer to hand, which may be occupied at so much less cost and difficulty, and for which we shall soon have the New Testament ready. Why should such a region be absolutely neglected in favour of the Arab-raided or Egypt-ravaged districts? I would not propose this as an alternative scheme and so stop all up-river progress, but only urge that such a region, which we are in such a good position to evangelise, and of which we have the language reduced, should be properly worked.'

Later on in that year Mr. Bentley had an idea that it might be wise to leave Wathen in September and spend the winter in Madeira with Nlemvo, in order to be able to continue the translation with less interruption, but we could not manage to get away.

We had a very pleasant Christmas in 1891, but the following month was a month full of trouble. On December 27th Dr. Harry Guinness, of Harley House, who had been visiting the Congo-Bolobo Mission, had arrived with his cousin, Mrs. McKittrick, who was suffering from hæmaturic fever. Our bedroom was placed at

her disposal, and she was carefully nursed. As soon as she was better Dr. Guinness went down with a fever of the same character. They were delayed on our station for three weeks through this sickness, leaving us on January 18th.

On January 16th we had a wedding on the station. One of our young men was married to Nlemvo's sister. Nlemvo's uncle had come up from his town near San Salvador to see his niece married. Dr. Guinness took a fine photograph of the wedding group. Next day one of our hospital in-patients died, and Mr. Percy Comber read suitable portions from the Burial Service over his grave. Who would have thought that in less than a week we should be standing a few yards from that spot reading the Burial Service over Percy Comber himself? He was only ill for fifty hours. He dined with us at six o'clock on Wednesday evening as usual, and spent the evening with us, as he often did, and on the Friday he was gone. We buried him the next morning. A great red ensign, the British flag, covered the table on which the coffin was placed. Over that was thrown the Mission flag as a pall. It is the ensign of St. George, having a red cross upon a white ground. Upon that Holman placed a just-opening palm-branch (frond), and I was able to put a wreath of beautiful tropical

flowers at the foot. It was a very impressive service.

On February 4, 1892, we started for our furlough, and on May 2nd we arrived in London. Hardly had we got home to breakfast with Holman's parents than our boy was brought to us. In June we crossed over to Holland to see my relations, and, as Holman felt that he would be able to work with less interruption on the Continent than in London, we took our little Henry and Nlemvo with us. We first spent a fortnight with our relations there, after which we went to the Hague, where we had rooms for about six weeks. Early in September we returned to England and settled down at Edgware, where a friend lent us her cottage. Living there was not quite so favourable to our work as we thought it would be, because we were just near enough for him to be called up to London for anything whenever wanted.

One incident of our work there may be worth recalling. Our little Henry had not learned to distinguish by name typewriting from translation work. One day, when his father was seated at the table with the typewriter, he ran into the room, and asked, 'Father, may I do some translating?' (He meant typewriting.) Mr. Bentley had just got to the verse where Christ

encourages the little ones to come to Him; and, having decided on the words to be used in the translation, he dictated the letters to be touched on the typewriter to Henry. Thus it was a little child who wrote in the Congo language those precious words of our Lord, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven' (Matt. xix. 14).

Chapter XVIII

Third Period in Congo

'In him revealed a scholar's genius shone,
And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
In him the spirit of a hero walked.'

WORDSWORTH.

WE hoped to have returned to Congo sooner than we actually did; but Mr. Bentley, in his Bible-translation work, would not leave one verse and go on to the next until he was satisfied that he had got the meaning clear, and used the right words. Thus it came that the translation of the New Testament was not finished until the end of September, 1893; when he at once sent Nlemvo back to Congo to save him from having to stay through another cold season in this country. There remained only the proof-reading. This occupied another two months, but by the beginning of December the last of the proofs had been read, the New Testament was in print, and we were able to start once more

for Congo, arriving at Banana just after Christmas.

When we reached Underhill a day or two after that, we were disappointed to find that there were no carriers to be had. It was five weeks before we could pursue our journey to Wathen; and a miserable journey it was, too. Holman said he never remembered a worse one. However, there is an end to all things, bad as well as good, and at last on Sunday, February 25th, we reached Wathen again. The welcome could not have been heartier. Several boys met us on the road—long before we reached Wathen; they were very excited.

On arriving at the station, we found that the school-house had been burnt down, and since then the usual services and the school classes had been held in our dining-room, that being the only unoccupied room at the time. As soon as we had got the house straight, Mr. Bentley's first care was to complete the Grammar.

On May 12th our little girl was born. The people of the near towns were so interested that I had many visitors who came to see the baby. On September 8th Holman again started on itineration. He intended to stay out a full month, but somehow or other, on the 25th, I

could not get rid of the feeling that he was nearer than we knew; and I frequently urged the girls to work well lest 'Mfumu' (Mr.) Bentley should come back and find us all in that muddle.

That night I dreamt that he had returned, and have never ceased to wonder what put those thoughts into my head, for who should walk into the house at about five o'clock but Holman —six days before we had any reason to expect him!

But in less than twenty minutes after he had returned, Dr. Webb sent for him to come immediately to assist in giving chloroform to Nlemvo's little boy, who had swallowed a fish-bone, and was choking. Dr. Webb performed tracheotomy, but in vain. Poor Nlemvo had gone out on some business about carriers that morning, leaving everybody perfectly well. They sent a man after him at eight o'clock that night, and they came back together at four o'clock the next morning. The child was still alive, but died soon after. How thankful I was that Holman was with him to help and comfort!

Soon after our return from England the Governor asked whether we could send him a boy who knew how to print, to do the work at

the Congo Press which they wanted to run at the Antwerp Exhibition. As no boy would care to go alone, two boys who had been trained by Holman at the Bromley Press at Wathen were sent. These boys did all the work of the Press at the Exhibition, under a white man acting for an Antwerp printing house. This was a good example to the Belgians of what could be done by these folks, and also spoke for us, showing that we were not content with simply teaching the people to 'sing hymns and wear trousers.' We wrote to acquaintances in Brussels, who found them good friends in Antwerp, so that they were not exposed to the temptations and dangers which might otherwise have come to them.

The school, meanwhile, grew rapidly. The boys and girls thus gathered together are from towns far and near, and for the time removed from the influence of their heathen homes. The services and teaching were still conducted in our dining-room. In order to separate the classes a little from each other, some had to be sent on to the verandah. In December, 1894, Mr. Bentley could say of the attendance: 'My wife counted 143 in attendance yesterday. She has sole charge of this work; and a big task it is, for, besides the actual school-hours from two to four

every afternoon, she has to attend to the general training of thirteen girls and three babies in arms, besides caring for our own dear little girl. We reckoned it an act of faith to prepare for 120 boys in the new dormitory which Sir Charles Wathen gave us, but we already have more than that number before the building is even put up. It will be full up at once. The food, too, which was our great fear, is coming in sufficiently, thank God.'

It was about this time that Mr. Bentley noticed that the currency (brass rods) had a much lower standard than before we left on furlough. Accordingly he undertook a financial rearrangement for the Church at Wathen. From the earliest times of the Mission, the Church members had been taught to contribute for God's work. At first there were no outposts and no Church expenses, so the money was simply stored. What with collections and gifts at one time and another, the rods had accumulated to a considerable number. When the outposts were started, the money still came in, and more than was necessary for expenses, so that the store still grew. The rods now used were some five inches shorter than when they were first given. These Mr. Bentley had cut down to the later standard, and put them on to the account of the

Church in the Wathen books. Some rods were sufficiently long to be halved, thus doubling their number. Just then francs were beginning to be used, and he gradually exchanged the rods for francs while the latter were cheap, the result being a net profit of 50 per cent. This gave the Church a balance of about £40, which was put into the Postal Savings Bank account.

Writing home by the January mail he says :—

'We had a fine gathering at Christmas. Margo brewed about thirty gallons of lime-juice, some of which was expressed before we went home three years ago. The boys put far more heart into the sports this year than ever I had known them to do. It was great fun and a very happy day.'

He always laid himself out to make the most of these opportunities, and gave himself whole-heartedly to the business of helping the boys and assembled visitors to enjoy themselves.

Mr. Bentley started a Temperance Society on December 31, 1894. 'The first suggestion came from Nlemvo, who thought that it would be a good thing, as drunkenness was causing much trouble in the country, and it would be well to get the Christians to abstain from taking strong

drink. As many as forty-six have promised to abstain.[1]

'The 1st of January is the anniversary of the Church, and that has been fixed as the day for the Annual Conference. Our members from Tungwa came in, and others besides who were hoping to join. Then, too, we had the great Church Meeting at which the accounts of the year have to be produced, officers for the year elected, and so on. On the Sunday after Christmas three of the evangelists gave their reports. At the Tuesday Church meeting an extra third deacon was elected.

'On New Year's morning, 1895, we had our second Missionary meeting, and received the reports of the messengers of the Church, and Lo from Kinsuka. The work at Kinsuka will have to be abandoned. Ever since 1891 he has been trying to get up a school, but without avail, through the mutual jealousy of the neighbouring Chiefs. That was the only business to mar the meetings; for the rest, the reports are most encouraging. The addresses were very good,

[1] Some years later when Dr. Bentley saw how this Society was progressing, he wrote to the Belgian Blue Cross Society to suggest that the Congo people should be affiliated with them and wear the same medal. The Doctor read the reply from Belgium to the people, who were very much rejoiced. The Society has been found a great help in the country.

and the attention and interest first-rate. On the afternoon of the 1st we held a communion service, and so the Conference broke up. These are the days of beginnings, and the beginnings of great things. These Conferences will grow into a Senate of the allied Churches of the district.'

On January 3, 1895, Holman went to start an outpost at Matadi Makito's town, which was put in charge of Nswalu, a personal boy of Mr. Cameron's. 'The school soon grew to such an extent (150 to 200 in daily attendance) that we were obliged to send boys to help the teacher. So our boys go a week at a time, such as we think fit to help; in this way they get to know how to manage such an affair that they may do the same when they return to their towns. This, we tell them, will be their duty; every Christian is expected to do his best to dispel the darkness of the land.'

Soon after the New Year Mr. Cameron had to go to Lukunga to look after transport. This meant Holman being in charge of the station with Dr. Webb, whose mornings were quite filled up with medical work. The intention was that when Mr. Cameron came back Holman should go to his district. 'But Mr. Cameron returned with fever, which assumed a form which

we had never seen before. For forty days no drugs or treatment had any effect on the patient's condition.

'On March 25th Dr. and Mrs. Webb left, and since then I figure as doctor. I have three boys trained by him as medical assistants, who do all the dirty work, and know pretty well what they are doing, so that it is not to me a very serious burden.

'We have been having one hundred patients every morning. The state of things on the road is dreadful. About 50 per cent. of the carriers get sick, 3 to 5 per cent. die; sometimes 10 per cent. get a serious inflammation of the eyes.

'I am also busy with the construction of the great school-house which Sir Charles Wathen gave us, and am clearing the upper end of a woody gorge for the early erection of our windmill.

'The printing office is at work too. In a day or two we shall print the rules of the Church as to witchcraft in all its branches, marriage, slavery, debt, borrowing and lending, gambling, and such things.[1] There are many things in a country like this which every one does, and thinks nothing of which require to be specially

[1] For these laws, see p. 257.

warned against. Then a hymn-book and other books will have to be printed. My evenings have been much occupied in talks with the boys who have come for special religious guidance and help, and as I always see each one separately, I am often so occupied from the time that I finish the evening meal until 9.30 or even later.'

In this year, too, an Appendix to the Dictionary of over four thousand words was published. In the translation of the New Testament especially many words till then unknown had cropped up, and these were all carefully noted down. Dr. R. N. Cust, Hon. Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society, than whom none was better qualified to give an opinion, wrote very kindly about it. He had received letters from German scholars to whom he had sent the book, expressing their wonder at the knowledge attained. For the rest the year 1895 was a simple round of work, the monotony of the everyday routine being relieved by week-end outings, by the ill-health of myself, and by attacks of fever which came to all three of us, especially our little girl.

A tour in his district, of about seven weeks' duration, in the cold season, produced some welcome proofs of progress amongst the people:

Photo] [*Rev. J. R. M. Stephens.*

INTERIOR OF SCHOOL CHAPEL, WATHEN.

[*Nearly three hundred boys and girls present.*]

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'One noticeable feature of this journey was the readiness and earnestness with which some listened to me. I have, of course, seen this many times before, but not to such an extent as now. The people are becoming used to seeing white men about, and can now give more attention to what we have to tell them.'

'When writing some time ago to the late Sir Charles Wathen, I said that our school here should become more of a college. In the future, we should hear of Wathen University. It sounded like a joke in those earlier days, and yet it was all in seriousness, and already we have begun to pick and choose, and to decline some of the boys offered to us, and to think of weeding out those we have. We are full up, and I had to refuse to take several boys from Tungwa who begged me most earnestly to take them. I have sent back two of our smallest boys from there, and have written for two boys well advanced, who have learned to read from Bukusu, to come in their places. One of the new Church members from Tungwa has come with me to Wathen; not to learn to read, for he reads well, but he comes for medical training, that he may do medical as well as evangelistic work. It is his own idea. Here, then, is the beginning of something more than an ordinary school.'

'At Tungwa I had a very happy time. After a baptismal service in the morning, we had a communion service in the afternoon, and gathered round the Lord's Table. After an explanatory address, I welcomed the new members, and urged them to a thorough consecration. . . . If there is joy in the presence of God over one repentant sinner, there was joy in the hearts of Thomas Comber and John Hartland when in Tungwa itself eight people sat down with us at the Lord's Table. They would not have many complaints about their weary tramps in their endeavours to open the country. I have always felt that we owe a debt to Tungwa, for, in the early days of opposition, the Tungwa folks showed themselves as friendly as they dared to. God's favour rests on those who show such favour to His servants. All along I have been expecting that a blessing would come to Tungwa. This is the beginning. How great the end will be we must wait to see. If this Tungwa work were the only outcome of our boarding-school system, it would warrant us to go on with it.

'Several at Tungwa brought their charms to me and told me they were no use any more. My dinner on the Sunday of the baptism was cooked with the wood of the fetish image, four feet high, which was publicly hacked to pieces by one

of our new Church members, to whom it had belonged. I told the Chief that I hoped some day to take home with me "Kavola-Ndondo" also, the great fetish which has been until now his main stay. It is a charm which comes from Zombo, away to the west and south of Tungwa. It is a bundle which looks like a dead baby in its shroud. It used to be kept in a little house, four feet by three feet, beside the Chief's house, with a lot of crooked roots and other fetish apparatus. Now the apparatus has disappeared. The little house is now used as a fowl-house, and "Kavola-Ndondo" was stuck up on two pieces of bamboo in front of an old house. I hope I shall be able to take it away before long. I might have taken it violently, and bluffed the Chief into acquiescence even then, but people's *hearts* are not to be touched that way."

Shortly after his return, Miss de Hailes arrived out in Congo, and Mr. Bentley escorted her to Stanley Pool. Whilst there, he contracted fever, and was very ill for three days. He gratefully acknowledged God's goodness in restoring him sufficiently to enable him to return home, also the kind nursing of the colleagues there; although on reaching Wathen he had to go to bed as soon as the 'welcomings' from the boys were over. It was another case of sun-fever.

His temperature never rose very high, but it was persistent, and lasted for twenty-five days. He was in bed all December.

Mr. Davies, who had been feeling ill, stayed up to welcome Holman back, but that same day he, too, went to bed with a fever. In Mr. Davies' case it terminated fatally on December 4th. Holman was very much distressed about it, for he was deeply attached to Mr. Davies. Writing to Mr. Davies' father, he says: 'To me it comes as a personal blow. Never did he speak a word to cause me pain. His judgment was always so good, and his head so clear. He was perhaps greatest in counsel. So many questions are often cropping up, subtle, complicated, far-reaching, most perplexing, needing instant and decided treatment. It comes at a very critical time for the Native Church. Just now ripe experience and good judgment are so much needed, and yet at this time our dear Philip is called away. As you bore for so long the burden of the business details of the Church at Reading, a mass of work that no one realises, so Philip took the drudgery of the transport, store- and account-keeping, and the business part of the station work, and most admirably was it done. He took a keen interest in the progress of the work here, and was much loved by his boys—indeed, by all. They always

had free run of his rooms. He would leave any work at any time to talk with those who sought his advice and help in spiritual matters. He was very careful with inquirers, and very anxious that our work should be done on thorough and sound lines. I feel very keenly this bereavement, for, after such a long time together, the brotherly feeling grows strong. He was a most helpful reference in translation work. His store of knowledge was great, and always available. Much help has he rendered me. He was a colleague one could be sure of in all emergencies. Now, with sad hearts, we shall miss him; his place cannot be filled.'

In the January following, Holman was still very weak, and also had returns of the fever, but in February he started southward again for one of his short dry-season itinerations. This year he had four long outings; first into his own district to the south, then with Mr. Bell, when they founded outpost stations at Kisantu and Lovo. They were away about twenty-five days. In June he went again southwards. This journey furnishes another instance of how he made his plans give way to the leadings of Providence. Already, in 1891, as it has been seen, he had begun to wish for the commencing of work in the Zombo district. In 1894 he had written to

Mr. Lewis asking him to visit those parts, but he had never yet been there himself. At last, however, this year, he was led there by a chain of coincidences which were unmistakably of God. A more detailed account of this is given in *Pioneering on the Congo*, vol. ii. p. 204.

Returning from Zombo, he received a letter suggesting the building of the Comber Memorial Church at Makuta ; but he felt that the Makuta people ought to do that themselves, and being strengthened by this last journey in his faith that God's finger was pointing Zombowards, he suggested that it would be a more worthy thing if the Comber Memorial Station should be raised in Zombo. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis offered to undertake the work there, and in June, 1899, the work was commenced.

He had only been home ten days when he started for Stanley Falls, which kept him away three months. His main work in the periods between these journeys, not to speak of Church affairs and talks with individuals, was the revising of the New Testament with Mr. Cameron, and the printing of the new hymn-book with its 381 hymns, of which 32 were from his own pen, some being translations, others original compositions. Then came Christmas with its joyful bustle of anniversary meetings, and in the middle of

Photo] [*Rev. Th. Lewis.*

HOLMAN BENTLEY IN KIBOKOLO.

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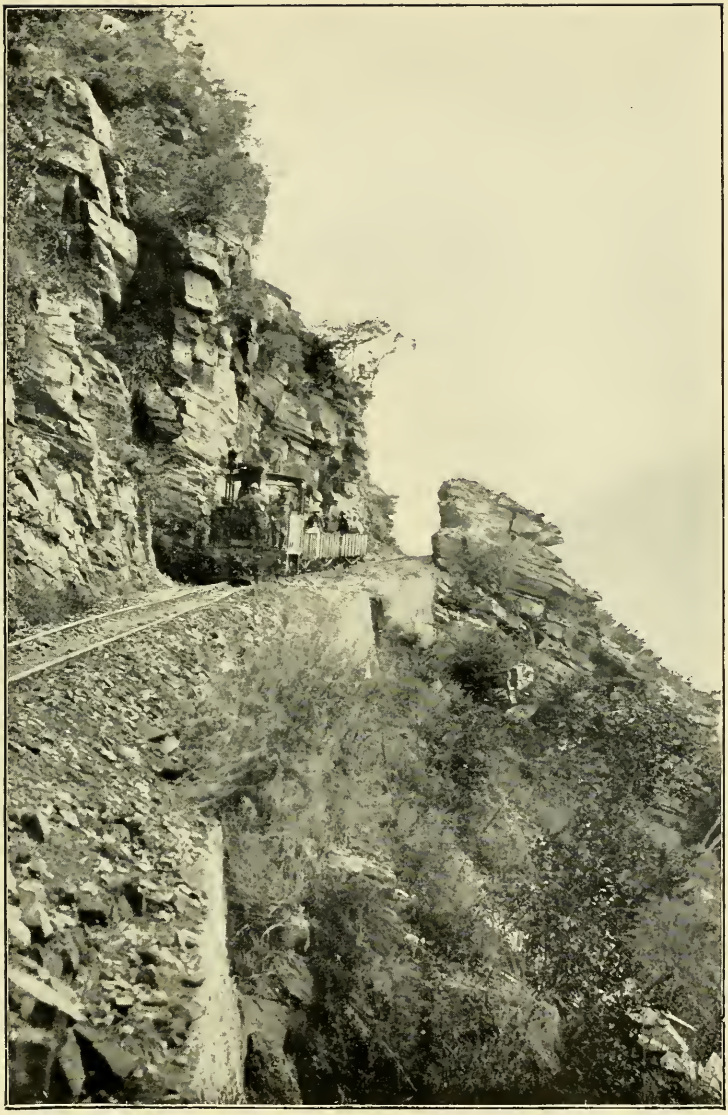
January he started again southwards for a tour through his district which lasted five weeks.

On his return home, Mr. Bentley was struck with a change in our little one's appearance, and considered that there was but one thing to do for her, and that was to send her home immediately. He bade me prepare at once to take her home by the next steamer. In the end of March, Holman escorted me to Underhill on my way to England. It was in the early days of the train service, and the journey, for which we only allow one day now, took us two and a half days—that is, we started on Tuesday morning, March 23rd, at six o'clock, from Tumba, and reached Matadi on Thursday, the 25th, at about 2 p.m. It was our first journey on the railway that time, and as journeys like this do not occur every day, I will insert part of his letter describing the return journey :—

'I am safe and sound at home, if home it be when all that is dear and "Home" has flown away. We waited a long time at Nkengi, and at 4.30 we were near Bembezi, when, on a cutting in the curve of the hill, the engine ran off the metals. I made a cup of tea, and then went to see the work of putting the engine on again ; it was a new engine. The sub-director was with us. After an hour, she was on the lines again. She

backed a little, then started forward, and was off the rails again a foot behind the former place! The sun went down, and they had only the big front lantern of the engine to light them, so I came to their help with mine. An hour and a half and we were all right again. Once more we backed, but had a great deal of trouble to move ahead. At last we did so, and derailed again two metres further on. M. B—— was sick of it, and said that it was very annoying. Once again we set to work. This time it was more difficult. At 11.30 we moved, and this time got safely away. The train was too heavy, and at the hill the other side of the Luvu River, we stuck and could not get ahead. Fearing another derailment, we dropped slowly back down the hill, and we and the two behind cars waited on the bridge, while the engine took up half the train to the station, a quarter of an hour away. At last another engine came to fetch us, and on arriving at the station we found the down train waiting for us there at 2.30 in the morning. No passenger car; the white men were sitting on the tarpaulins. On our arriving they started at once. We went on also, and with difficulty reached Songololo at 5.15. M. B—— sat before the station-master's table on a chair, a miserable heap. I spread my



A PIECE OF THE CONGO STATE RAILWAY.

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canvas on the floor, but could not sleep. The telephone was incessant, and people in and out.

'At ten o'clock we started again with another engine, and a still heavier train. We did not reach the Kwilu till three. Then they telephoned to Tumba for an engine to take us on. It arrived in two and a half hours' time. Meanwhile, I walked down to the bridge, and there fell asleep for a while.

'At last the engine came, and finally at 5.30 we started again. The train was still too heavy, and we often had to make two tries at a hill, and often to wait at the foot of a hill for a time, to get up steam pressure sufficient. We reached Tumba at 12.15 (midnight) on Sunday morning.'

On reaching Tumba on the return journey, he found Mr. Pople seriously ill. He died while Holman was there. This necessitated Mr. Frame's rendering temporary help at Tumba, which placed them in serious difficulties at Wathen, especially as Mr. Cameron had gone away up-river, and there was very little chance of progress being made with the translation work. He writes to an old friend: 'We are in a terrible hole now my wife is away. I am hopelessly behind with my work. Bell ought to run out to Kinsaku where a witch has been killed; and I to another place where there has been a murder;

and there are plenty of local palavers. Some matters I can arbitrate in, or get them to come to a settlement. A good many have to be sent to the State. I work long hours, but cannot get through the ordinary business that comes, much less touch my translation work. Natives are coming to me about all sorts of things. To refuse to help, and advise, and write out *procès verbaux* is to hold back the Kingdom of Righteousness and peace for which we pray. I have been back from Tumba more than a month, but have had an almost unbroken succession of palavers. I have another case of murder for witchcraft, and yesterday I arranged with the murderers and their witnesses to go down to Tumba to be judged. They flatter themselves that they will only have to pay a few goats. I shall ask the commissaire to make an example of them.

'We ought to make some bricks soon for the floor of the school and the dormitory, but neither Mr. Bell nor I can find time. Makito is constantly asking my advice and getting me to translate letters to and from the State for him. Now, too, the Governor-General has made me Registrar for the district (1,000 square miles). Happily, very few natives avail themselves of the Registry. There is a good deal of red tape

about it, and it all takes time. Of course, it is all done in French. Nlemvo[1] and all the rest are to be civilly married, recognising their children on the 'Acte de marriage,' thus making them as legitimate as though they were born after the civil ceremony. The civilised natives are to be enrolled. If any one who has been civilly married takes another wife, the proper wife can easily get a divorce. This should tend to the improvement of morals out here. Those enrolled have full civil rights. As I am Commissioner for protection of the natives, I have taken in hand a murder by a soldier. The power has been removed very largely from the hands of the District Commissioner; our Commissioner is very mad about it, and when a *procés verbal* caused him to write to tell me that in future I must address the Judge at Matadi, he wound up the somewhat curt letter telling me of his loss of power, and addressed me as "Member of the Society for the Protection of 'blacks' in Congo!"'

The wish of the authorities to make Mr. Bentley a magistrate has already been noticed. At Mboma that spring the Governor, asking me what Mr. Bentley thought about a certain affair,

[1] It will be remembered that Nlemvo was properly married before the Mission staff in 1888, but there was no civil register at that time, hence the need of his going through the ceremony a second time.

bore witness to his influence in the country: 'We all know that he knows the country and the people better than any one, and that the natives are devoted to him, and would do anything for him; what do you think he would advise in this case?' One official admitted having been told that, if ever he got into a difficulty with the natives, he must 'ask Mr. Bentley's advice.' But in regard to the position of a magistrate, Mr. Bentley felt that it would be impossible to occupy the double office of magistrate and missionary. How could he visit in the name of the law the sins of the law-breakers upon their heads on one day, and then go to preach the gospel to them on another? It is a fact, however, that the natives often brought their quarrels to him to settle, and generally accepted his advice. They knew that in him they had a friend who could understand their difficulties, and they trusted him.

In October, 1897, he was able to send home news of general progress in the work, and a request for the help of more ladies. The tidings from Tungwa were especially hopeful:—

'I have just come back from an itineration of forty days in my district. The Church is becoming a power round about Tungwa. They have been helping people in trouble, and taken several cases to the State which have been well attended to, and

now people far away even, when in trouble, go to them for help. At Tungwa you might say that the pick of the town are in the Church. There is an immense difference between a lazy, drunken, dirty heathen and the young man, converted, educated, who can enjoy a couple of hours listening to Church history. The native must be very blind if he cannot see a difference; no wonder that they are respected and already becoming a power.'

When I reached England I had been very much startled with the change in and weakness of Mr. Bentley's father, and told Holman in my letters that he did not seem at all well. Writing to his parents, Mr. Bentley recalls the nearness of the Congo workers to the other world: 'The very thought of losing you is hard to bear. I do so want to see you at least once more, both of you. Only now have I been apprehensive of it. May our Heavenly Father grant our wish if it is good in His sight! . . . We do not say *in eternum vale*. We only talk of "a little while." To me that is no figure of speech; it is very real. Out here we look at things otherwise than people do, as a rule, at home; not that I have any premonitions of an early decease myself, but our work keeps the other world so near to us and so very real, and in very many ways we come so

much in contact with death, that such thoughts must come. But when they do come it is not as gloomy forebodings. Separated as we are, heaven becomes a land of reunions rather than earth. A big lump comes in my throat as I write this, but it is so. Within the last week I have lost a girl and a boy, both, I believe, trusting in Jesus, and that before they fell sick. Unmanageable fevers did not give us much time or opportunity for talk, but health did, and that is as it should be. The poor little boy lay two days dying in my study, and now he is with the Saviour. What could be better?'

To Mr. Baynes he writes: 'We feel that this increased and increasing work demands further help. Who is to look after them and care for them when Mrs. Bell goes home on furlough? We trust my wife will be able to return shortly so that the thirty girls may not be left without a lady on the station to look after them; but there is no question that the staff is altogether inadequate to the work; and after much consideration my colleagues and I feel we must beg the Committee to send two ladies to aid in the work here at Wathen. You may well expect us to do our best, but the strain which has done so much harm to my wife is more than you can ask us to bear, and a wise economy asks that an addition

should be made to the station. If the result of our work and policy were not yet apparent, you might hesitate, but such blessing has been given to the work that we feel there is no call for remark in that direction. We thought it was an act of faith to make provision for 120 boys in the building which Sir Charles Wathen gave us, but already we are thoroughly crowded out. I am sure there is no need for further urging.'

Early in October, 1897, we had to telegraph to him the serious condition of his father's health. This, combined with the fact that I was at the time in England, made him seriously consider the advisability of going home to England. He writes thus to the colleagues about the matter: 'My father is seriously ill, and not likely to recover. I should hesitate to go home under ordinary circumstances just to see my poor father die; of course one would naturally wish to do so, but there are duties here. However, as my wife's health will not allow her to return for some months yet, and I shall have been out four years by the time I get home, all things considered it seems best to obey the telegram. If my wife's return were to be long delayed, I should have to prolong my stay here on account of her recent arrival, longer than it would be wise for me. It is hard to go, the work is developing fast

just now, but it seems best. I shall take materials for my book with me, but no other work.'

It was in this year (1897) that the Brussels Exhibition awarded Mr. Bentley a diploma, with gold medal, for his literary work, and that he was made a Chevalier of the Order of the Lion of the Congo by King Leopold in recognition of his work in the Congo.

Chapter XIX

Last Days and Home-call

'The great work laid upon his twoscore years
Is done, and well done. If we drop our tears
Who loved him as few men were ever loved,
We mourn no blighted hope nor broken plan,
With him whose life stands rounded and approved
In the full growth and stature of a man.'

WHITTIER.

NOT much remains to be told. Holman Bentley's methods and ideas have been explained, his itinerations described; the chronological order of the events of the last years can quickly be given. But who can measure the extent of his influence over the people, or say how many of the changes in the country are due to his wisdom in drawing out all that was best in its children? It is undeniable that no district has shown such remarkable development as that to which he devoted his energies.

He left Wathen on Monday, October 25, 1897, had a long talk with the Governor at Mboma, and finally sailed from Banana on Saturday, November 2nd. He reached England on December 1st, but

a few days too late to see his father alive. When, soon after his arrival, he went to be examined by the medical adviser of the Society, he was said to have a very much enlarged spleen; to be weak and too thin, but otherwise well. Arriving in England in the cold season did him no good, and, an opportunity offering for him to visit the Mediterranean, he went. It was a great treat to him, and did him much good in every way. He visited Egypt and the Holy Land, Constantinople and Athens — not along the beaten track of tourists, but on lines of his own, helped by the suggestions of such friends as the agents of the Bible Society, Church Missionary Society missionaries, and Seamen's Home missionaries, who, being of kindred mind with himself, were better able to tell him exactly what he should do and what leave undone.

Alas! on the return journey he caught a cold in the Straits of Messina, and, not having as yet regained his strength, he could not manage to throw it off.

Soon after reaching home he was obliged to consult the doctor, who said his condition was serious. What had he been doing? Where had he been? The tour through the Levant was mentioned. 'Then you had better go back to Egypt at once, or Algeria.' To this Holman

demurred. The reply was, 'It is your only chance. You are far gone in phthisis.'

Mr. Bentley now realised the seriousness of the case, and he felt that if he had only a little while to live, he would prefer to remain at home with us. He replied that he might perhaps lose as much on the one hand, through missing the home comforts, as he would gain on the other. To this the doctor said, 'Well, then, go to Bournemouth; go immediately; try the Nordrach treatment.' On his return from the doctor I met Holman at a friend's house at Clapton, and found him in a very collapsed state. He told me all, and said he could not go to Edgware (where we were staying) to pack up, but would remain with the kind friends at whose house he then was, and meet me on the day after the next at another friend's, from where we could go to Bournemouth together.

I shall never forget his saying to me that night as we retired to rest, 'I know I am very ill, but God gave me back my eyes, and He can give me back my lungs also, if He has further use for me.'

In Bournemouth we first went to a boarding-house kept by an old friend of the family. Thence we moved into a small furnished house. The day we went into it Holman was sent straight to

bed, and ordered not to leave it for a week. For a considerable period the doctor would not allow him to go up and down stairs, lest the exertion should bring on accelerated breathing and cause more hæmorrhage from the lungs. At one time he even forbade him to speak. If he had any communication to make it must be by the deaf and dumb alphabet, or by writing, and more than once the doctor threatened to take him away to a sanatorium.

Part of the Nordrach treatment is that the patients have to take 100 ounces of food per day. Mr. Bentley found this very difficult, but as soon as we were in our 'own hired house' I started cooking his food myself, and this helped. At first the doctor used to insist on my keeping a careful record and description of the food that he had had, and the amount carefully weighed; but, after a while, being satisfied that matters were progressing favourably he did not always ask to see my little book. On Holman's part, the perfect freedom from all anxiety and worry helped to make the treatment a success. All this time he had been having his meals upstairs by himself, and he found that his best way to get the prescribed amount down was to take a book and start reading. By and by he would

Photo] [*Hills & Saunders.*

THE REV. H. E. CRUDGINGTON.

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become so engrossed and interested in his book that the eating became a mechanical task, which went on until the supply was exhausted.

It was about this time that Mr. Bentley started writing his book, *Pioneering on the Congo.* It had been suggested to him to do this long before then, but he would not slacken his missionary work for that. Now, however, he became very anxious to do it, because he realised that probably there was no man living who knew as much of the early history of the Mission, or of the history of the country itself before the Mission was started, as he did, and he did not want this knowledge to be lost. Many colleagues had been gathered to their rest. His own health was grievously impaired; yet there was much which he alone could tell at first hand. Holman, therefore, felt that if he were to die without embodying his early experiences in a book, much interesting information would be lost. Being now laid aside from active work he felt free to grasp this opportunity of undertaking the task.

Thank God, our hope was not put to shame! In March we began to see clear signs that the disease was arrested, and from that time he rapidly gained in strength. By and by he saw no reason for abandoning the field he loved so well,

and on January 10, 1900, we once more started for Congo.

Those who had wondered at Mr. Bentley's being sent out again to Congo were surprised to find him able to work just in his old way, with strength apparently unimpared. He would rise at six in the morning and, without taking any rest in the middle of the day, he would work on until ten o'clock at night—it was as often eleven o'clock as ten. He felt that God had given him back his strength for work, and that he *must* work. There was no stopping him. He was always working at high pressure, and, as his natural powers decreased, he forced himself to do what lay before him by sheer strength of will.

To show how completely he took his full share of the work again, I describe one journey which he was called upon to make in November, 1900. One of the colleagues, out on itineration, wrote to say that he was taken with a fever of the bad type, and asked for some one to come and fetch him back. We were having our evening meal. Holman had just got up that day, for the first time, after a week in bed with fever. He looked at me, and I looked at him ; we both felt it was a risky thing for him to do. But this type of fever

requires immediate action to be taken, and Holman sent word to his boys to prepare to accompany him that very evening on the road.

They started at nine o'clock. It was a moonlight night. They walked the whole night until eight o'clock the next morning, when they arrived at the town where they expected to find the sick man. They were told that he had gone on to the next town. They rested for a little while, and Holman was able to have a cup of tea before proceeding, refreshing himself with a short sleep while it was being made. After about an hour's delay they continued the journey, reaching the second town, where they found the sick man, to whose help they had gone, much better.

One thing that helped Mr. Bentley to keep up at this high speed was his ability to sleep at any time and in any position. When tired, he would sometimes lay down his knife and fork at meals, and shut his eyes, and go off to sleep whilst the boys were changing the plates for our second course; and if we had finished dinner before the coffee was ready he would lie down on the Madeira couch to sleep whilst it was being made. But as soon

as it was brought he would wake up, take it, and start work again without delay. He used to say that the losing of consciousness, even if it were for a moment only, would make him feel quite fresh again.

In 1901 we read in the Report of the station the following sentence: 'I must go out again directly down to the frontier, to inspect the twenty-two schools in my district. Twice a year is the minimum of superintendence which I can venture to give. But for the Good Shepherd Who does not expect impossible things of His servants, I do not know what would become of the remoter work. The Divine Spirit imparts the needed gifts and graces, and is leading and working in the Church here. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

The great task which now lay before him was the translation of the Old Testament. He first completed the Book of Genesis, parts of which had already appeared as articles in the magazine, *Se Kukianga*. This was printed in book form at Wathen under his superintendence. Next came Proverbs, which Nekaka, one of the San Salvador outpost teachers, had already essayed to do. But as he had worked from the English only it needed to be gone

through and compared with the Hebrew text, and the various translations that Holman used for his own work. After this was done the Psalms were started. These, however, he was not able to finish before he had again to leave Wathen.

Towards the end of the year 1903 it seemed as if I should have to go home to England on account of my health, but as this would be a very trying break in the work, and we both wanted to be at Wathen in June for the harvest thanksgiving, when the twenty-fifth anniversary of the starting of our Mission in Congo would be held, we resolved that I should hold out as long as possible. After discussing the matter with his colleagues, it was considered that it would be best for Holman to take me home directly after the Silver Jubilee Meetings in June. By this arrangement he would get his furlough over in time to relieve the colleague whose turn came next. But in January next it suddenly became necessary for me to go. As Holman was then actually preparing to go out into his district, he told me to pack up quickly so that he might take me down to Underhill before proceeding further on his contemplated tour. Two days after that we started. After taking me

down to the Coast, he first went up to Stanley Pool to attend the Missionary Conference there. As the home was once more broken up, he spent rather longer than usual in his district that year, not returning to Wathen until March 15th.

It was a hard year for him. The Hymn-book was still in the press. Besides this, he was printing a French Vocabulary and Grammar, which, originally intended for the use of my classes only, had been enlarged and made more complete, with the hope of its being used by others as well. These two things were a great burden to him, for he felt they must be finished before he could think of leaving on furlough himself.

And this is how he managed to do it. He had three sets of boys to relieve each other at the press, so that the machine itself did not cease working night nor day. In the daytime he would correct and prepare for the next day's work, and when the night shift was at work he would pay them surprise visits at different times every night.

By and by the pressure of the work upon his brain became such that, whenever at night there was a cessation of work, the unusual quietness in the house would wake him, and he would be up to see what was the hitch.

Even working at this rate, he did not manage to finish the books before October. He was very anxious not to arrive in England in the depth of winter; hence his pushing on with the work so fast. After this high pressure in the printing office there was the sewing and binding to be done. He says: 'Tables, rough and otherwise, were set up in every available spot in my house, on the verandahs, and in the rooms. All suitable boxes were requisitioned and, with lids and bottoms removed, were extemporised as sewing frames. Fifty of the most intelligent of our scholars were set to work to sew and bind the books; sometimes, of course, a sheet was wrongly folded or sorted, as the work was new to most of them; but still in this way the work was done.'

Only by working at this rate was he able to leave Wathen on October 5th, sailing from the mouth of the river on the 16th, and reaching England in November. He paid us a flying visit in Bristol, but spent practically all November and December on the Continent.

In September he had been into the French Congo territory, where one of our Church members had been maltreated and tied up unjustly by a soldier. When this had been set right, Mr. Bentley made a further request

that the man should be permitted to teach his fellow-countrymen. But the officer in charge could not (or would not) give the desired permission, and told Holman he would have to go to headquarters in Paris for this, which he did immediately on arriving in Europe. His furlough therefore cannot really be said to have begun until Christmas, 1904, when we met in London at our friend's house, returning back to Bristol together on January 4th.

Shortly after his return home, when he happened to be up in London on Mission business, we were surprised at home by the information that the University of Glasgow had decided to confer upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. This was in recognition of the scholarship displayed in the reduction of the Congo language to a scientific system, of the high quality of his work in general, more especially as shown in preparing the grammar of the language and the translation of the New Testament. It was an entirely unexpected honour, but none the less highly appreciated. Notice was sent that the day for the 'capping' was to be April 18th. Shortly before that time very kind and gratifying letters came to us from friends in Glasgow, who were pleased that he should have been thus honoured, to

say that they were wishing to present him with his cap and gown. Quite naturally, nothing would satisfy me but that I must go with him to see him thus honoured. The friend with whom he was to stay kindly included me in her invitation, and, to my great delight, I was able to accompany him. Being rather shy, he very much dreaded the ceremony, but on account of alphabetical order of names, he was one of the first to be 'capped,' and he told me afterwards that, once through the ordeal himself, he enjoyed sitting there and seeing it all. We stayed away about a fortnight.

Holman's faithful helper all these years had not come with him to England this time, but he was to follow as soon as the warm weather should set in. On arriving home, therefore, Dr. Bentley lost no time in preparing to set to work with his translation as soon as Nlemvo should come in May. The first week of July he had to keep his bed, but recovered in time to attend the Baptist World Congress, where he read a paper on 'The Claims of Africa.' Nlemvo also spoke a few well-chosen words. After that Holman went on deputation work for a few days to Liverpool, and again to Cornwall for a week. Although his strength was hardly equal to it, Dr. Bentley very much enjoyed

acting as a deputation. It brought him into touch with people who were interested in the work which was to him as the apple of his eye.

At home, Dr. Bentley again applied himself closely to translation work, and made such progress with the Psalms that towards the end of the year he arranged to go to London in December to consult with the Mission House authorities, and finally with the Bible Society as to the form of the printing. He felt that although the whole Bible was not ready, at any rate the Psalms might be printed, and the Proverbs, which would be so useful in a country just emerging out of heathenism, like the Congo. Most unusual for him, just before starting his nerve seemed to leave him, and he evidently shrank from the undertaking. He said he felt he had hardly the strength for it, and looked forward with dread to the rushing about of the busy week that lay before him. Of course I begged him not to go, but having arranged it all, and made appointments with people, he did not see how he could give it up.

I received two or three postcards that week with satisfactory accounts, so that I was not at all prepared on the Thursday before Christmas to receive him home in a state of utter collapse. Our old friends, the Misses Fletcher, from whom

Photo] [*Frank Holmes.*

MRS. HOLMAN BENTLEY.

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we had received so much kindness, were coming to spend the Christmas with us, and my husband arranged to travel down with them. At the time fixed we went to the station to meet them; we waited for three trains to come in, but they were in neither of these. Finally, thinking that perhaps the usual congested state of the traffic at Christmas time had prevented their arriving at the Bristol terminus in time to catch the Clifton train fixed upon, and hearing from the porter that there would be no other train for half an hour, I went back to our house, which was only three minutes' walking distance, meaning to return again. On reaching home a cab was at the door; they had driven up from the terminus. Our friends had hardly got their things into the house, but my husband was already seated in a chair, utterly collapsed and unable to help. He took our advice, and went to bed early that night.

On Friday and Saturday, both days, he had absolutely no strength for anything; and his cough, which had ever since his arrival in England this time been troublesome off and on at nights, tried him very much. He did not stay in bed, however. He would dress to spend the days with us. On Sunday morning as he came down he seemed very much brighter.

'I have had seven hours' sleep straight off,' he said; 'I feel like a different man.' He seemed indeed to be his old self, and took his proper place at the breakfast table.

By and by we all started for the Sunday morning service. But the walk, although less than ten minutes' distance from Tyndale Chapel, was evidently too much for him. Noticing how fagged he seemed, and that during the singing of the first hymn he had to support himself against the arm of the pew in order to be able to stand, I whispered to him to remain seated during the singing.

'No,' he said, 'the people would think I am worse than I am.'

I said, 'I am tired; I will keep you company.' Whereupon he answered, 'You can sit if you like. It does not matter so much for ladies, but it is not the thing for a man.' Coming out of the service, as it was the day before Christmas, I lingered behind to shake hands with some friends, and wish them a happy Christmas, whilst he went on home with others.

I overtook them about half-way home, and was dismayed to see the expression in his face as I caught him up.

He had evidently been walking too fast, and was much exhausted by the effort. I gave him

my arm immediately. He hung on to me like a leaden weight. It was with difficulty that we crossed the road, and then he had to stand for a few minutes and lean for support against a door.

At last we in this way reached home, having taken between five and ten minutes to do what would otherwise have taken us hardly more than one minute. On reaching home he immediately sat down in an arm-chair, from which he did not stir again the whole day until the evening after tea, when he went upstairs early to bed.

I had wished before to send for a doctor, but he said, 'No, it is only that I am over-tired. All I want is rest.' But on Monday morning I sent, as it seemed to me that it was more than simple rest that he wanted. The doctor came, and found that it was indeed so. He did not say that there was anything specially the matter, but evidently thought that the case needed watching, as he said he would come again in the evening. During the day I noticed that Holman needed support sometimes to change his position, so we did not leave him alone that night. In the evening when the doctor came he found him much weaker. Still he did not even then tell me that there was anything to be alarmed at. In fact, when I asked him, he

said to me, 'Oh no; he was worse when I attended him last July than he is now.'

Next morning the doctor came again, and being disappointed in the result of the medicine, prescribed another remedy, and left, saying he would come in again in the evening. 'Please, don't trouble, Doctor,' my husband said; 'it is Christmas Day, and I cannot think of your leaving the home circle to come and see me.' But the doctor had another case which would necessitate his going out, and so my husband acquiesced.

In the evening at seven o'clock the doctor came and found Holman much weaker and the breathing very troublesome. Knowing that he had hardly slept the previous night, he said, 'I will come again at eleven o'clock to see if you are sleeping. If not, I shall have to give you something to send you to sleep.' About half-past eight our little Janie came to say 'Good-night' to her father. 'Good-night, Dopperty,' he said, calling her once more by her pet name and giving her a kiss. She was the only one who had a farewell kiss from him! When the doctor came, at eleven, he found the breathing very distressing, and saw that it was quite impossible for the patient to get any sleep in that state. He therefore quickly went to fetch

something to relieve him, The next three hours I must pass over. But not until three o'clock did the doctor warn me to expect the end. 'The fact is,' he said, 'he has lived up to the last ounce of his strength, and has no power to rally.'

About three-quarters of an hour after that God had taken Holman to Himself.

It would have been more to my mind to have ended this memoir here, but I have been urged to tell all, 'to the very end.' For the sake of the friends who have asked me to do it I will add the account of how the dear remains were laid to rest.

On January 1, 1906, the doors of Tyndale Chapel were opened to receive Holman Bentley once more—not as a humble worshipper this time. If he indeed was there, it was as one of the

'Saints who from their labours rest.'

All that presented itself to our eyes was the case containing the worn body, covered with a pall similar to the one he chose for the covering of the colleagues in Congo when they were carried to their last earthly resting-place—the red cross on a white ground, the flag of our Congo Mission. Nor was the palm-branch lacking.

Dr. Glover read some beautiful, faith-strengthening passages from the Words of Life, and Mr. Phillips, who had been in our party going out in 1886, was present, and gave the address.

I remember but one thing that Mr. Phillips said. It was to this effect, that whereas some have said that it was wasting time for a missionary to give years and years to the study of the language whilst souls lying in heathen darkness were crying for the light, Dr. Bentley had shown true wisdom in placing the compiling of the Dictionary and the Grammar *before* the translation of the Bible. For it had given him so much better grasp of the language than he otherwise would have had; and the very doing of that work had helped to fit him more than anything else could have done for the all-important work of translating the Word of God.

We had two hymns that Holman had himself translated into Congo, and on leaving the chapel the organist played 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' I had often sung this to him in Congo; he always liked to hear it, and I was glad to be reminded just then that he was with Him Who 'was dead and is alive for evermore.'

Chapter XX

Recollections and Testimonies

'Could those few pleasant hours again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.'

I SHALL gather up in this chapter some of the personal tributes to the work of Dr. Bentley. And first I will quote some of the letters from his boys in Congo, written when the news of his death reached them :—

'Grief and sorrow indeed! From the time I heard the news my eyes can hardly see for weeping, I am dumb when I think of the sudden departure of our beloved father, and when I think things over in my mind, it gives me sorrow only. But when I cry for him then I think of you and the children who are left orphaned as are we

your children here. When I think of it I do nothing but cry, especially as I think that now we shall not see your face again either. It is the Lord's will! my hope is to see you again in the Kingdom of our Lord. Mama, now I will not say much, but tell you that I will not forget the teaching of Dr. Bentley, nor what he told me here the day we parted. He wrote me on Sept. '05: "Dear Baluti, God will bless you. It is not long that we have to live in this world, let us serve Jesus with all our heart, and all our strength, and do our best to please Him and make Him glad. He has gone to prepare a place for us, and wants to prepare us for it, and the best preparation comes in work for Him." Yes, when I took his letter to read again my heart failed, I cried then as I am doing now, but he is where there are no tears, he has gone to the land of glory, he has gone to rest from his work, he has left all his trouble and the weariness of his overcrowding work. We know the saying: "One soweth, another reapeth." The work continues, he is gone. It is thus the Lord's will. But many of us, especially I, am very thankful, for through his word I became a Christian. I will not forget his teaching, especially that of the day when we parted here, he spoke long with me. Ah, I am left indeed.

And now we are all crying, we in the Lowlands! We are stunned. I do not know how this trouble is ever to leave my heart. The Lord God is a Comforter, we pray Him to comfort us, and you and the children. . . .

'I am your boy and pupil,

'BALUTI N. KAYEMBE.'

'*To our Mother in Christ and Teacher.*

'Our Chief Noso and all the christians send you tender greetings, though our hearts are full of sorrow because our dear teacher has been sent for by the Lord Jesus. Therefore we send you greetings and do not forget to pray for you day and night. May the Holy Spirit comfort you, for our teacher who has gone to rest from his labour. But in a little while we hope to see him again in everlasting glory. We add these words from John 17th verse 24 and also Rev. 14, 13, and the hymn 113 [translation of "My God, my Father, while I stray"].

'Your brother in Jesus Noso, and all the christians at Mbanza Mputu.'

'*To my Mother.*

'Greeting. Oh what shall I do? One thing only remains. I give myself in the hands of

Him who kept my beloved teacher Dr. Bentley. We his elder boys are in great trouble, but we will not give up. In the strength of the Lord Jesus we shall meet again. . . . Lendwa has sleep-sickness. . . . Now dear mama do not be too sad, we shall go to him.

'A. Mayulu.'

'*To my respected and beloved Teacher Madame Bentley.*

'Greetings. We are indeed in sorrow and tears at the news of the death of our beloved Teacher Dr. Bentley. What sad news! That Saturday 13th of Jan. sorrow overcame us, sorrow upon sorrow. All his boys wept greatly that night when at eight o'clock we heard the news, especially the elder ones. Oh what sorrow for you and your children! But God is the Helper. He will comfort you and us. As for him we know that his trouble in the work is over, he is now rejoicing. All the people were sent for to be told the news, then Mr. Cameron told how the Doctor had helped the people, and how he had come to the country. Oh, we are indeed in trouble. Please send me a photo of you all four, Master and you mother, and Henry and Janie, for I know we

shall not see each other's face again except in Heaven.

'This is all. I am your loving boy,

ANDRÉ H. MBAKI.'

One more will be all that is wanted to show the great affection felt for him in Congo.

'*To our dear Teacher Mrs. Bentley.*

'With what heaviness I take the pen in my hand to write you this letter!

'On the 25th of this month we received a letter that threw us all into despair, our beloved teacher had been called by his Master and ours. When it was arranged that on the 28th we should have a Memorial Service for him, I did all I could to send messengers into the surrounding towns. On the day appointed a very great crowd gathered to remember with great grief and respect, him, that man of God. We took our teaching from the words of the Lord Jesus "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." When we had ended the memorial service, we arranged that a little letter should be written in the name of those assembled to show that this great trouble has not come to you and your children only, we are one with you in the grief of bereavement

of our beloved friend. Beloved Mother, and your children we do not forget you in our prayers.

'Loving greetings we send you from the bottom of our hearts, by the hand of your truly loving boy,

'MIGUEL NEKAKA.'

The above were not specially selected, but were taken at random from a pile of letters from Congo boys and 'old boys,' all testifying to their love and sorrow.

The Congo folk are, as a rule, very affectionate, and become very strongly attached to those who show them kindness, but I think I may safely say that no missionary was ever more deeply and universally loved by them than Dr. Bentley. But then who ever gave himself *more* whole-heartedly to a people than he did? Mbandila, one of our outpost teachers, the boy who lay for months in my husband's study with a bad knee, wrote the following: 'Two things we think of chiefly, The translation of the New Testament, because that can save many people, indeed any one who reads it, we can almost hear his voice as we read it, like when he used to teach us. The diligence with which he gave

himself to the spreading of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus his laboriousness night and day, and the way he allowed people to trouble him, but he never tired of them.'

To these testimonies I will only add a copy of the resolution sent me from the Congo Executive Committee and two very appreciative letters from his old colleagues, Mr. Weeks and Mr. Bell:—

'B.M.S., Thysville, Congo State.
'*January* 19, 1906.

'My dear Mrs. Bentley,—The news by cable came as a great shock, and at the Conference at Kinshasa caused a profound sensation. I replied by cable to Mr. Baynes: "All mourn Bentley." A memorial service was held by the Conference on Sunday morning, when a resolution was passed, all standing. The Conference secretaries will be sending you a copy of the resolution.

'Our B.M.S. Congo Executive Committee passed the following resolution and, as secretary, I was instructed to forward you a copy.

'"The Congo Executive Committee of the B.M.S., meeting at Stanley Pool, have heard with the deepest sorrow the sad news of the death of their beloved brother, the Reverend W. Holman Bentley, D.D.

'"They desire to express their thankfulness to God for the many gifts which He bestowed upon our brother, and for the grace which enabled him to devote these gifts so unreservedly to the service of God, in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society.

'"As one of the founders of the Congo Mission, Mr. Bentley's work in the many difficulties of the pioneering stage helped greatly to its establishment on sure foundations. In later days the development of the work at Wathen, where there are now over a thousand Church members and over one hundred village schools, was largely due to his untiring energy and perseverance, as well as to the unfailing hopefulness which characterised him so markedly, and which had its source in his strong faith in God.

'"The members of the Executive Committee desire especially to place on record their appreciation of his great literary and linguistic gifts, as well as the painstaking industry which put these gifts to practical use, mentioning in particular the 'Grammar' and 'Dictionary' of the Congo language compiled by him, and his translation of the New Testament—works which are, and will continue to be, of incalculable value to the extension and consoli-

dation of the cause of Christ in the Congo region."

'(*Signed*) LAWSON FORFEITT,
'*Secretary*
'(For the Conference).'

'HSI-AN-FU, SHENSI, N. CHINA.
'*February* 14, 1906.

'MY DEAR WILSON,—A few hours' ago I received a letter which gave me shock from which it will take a considerable time to recover, and that was the news, to my great surprise and grief, of the death of my former honoured leader, beloved colleague and intimate friend, Dr. Holman Bentley. My grief is greatly intensified by the fact that I was not at hand to join in the last solemn ceremony, to assist Mrs. Bentley and her children in this time of sore bereavement, or to add my note to the many who have doubtless publicly expressed their high appreciation and esteem as well as the affectionate regard in which they held Dr. Bentley. I hope that some facile pen will be found to give permanently to the world the story of his life, the many-sided characteristics of which are eminently suited for a bright, interesting, and most helpful biography.

'As a leader he was always several steps in

advance, full of sanguine hopes and projects, optimistic, energetic, fervent, and enthusiastic in a manner which forced emulation and advance. As a colleague, frank, free and open in the discussion of all matters which affected the welfare of the station, sympathetic in all private and personal concerns, and ever ready to help in the general routine of work in time of strain. As a friend he touched one at many points between the extremes of joy and sorrow, rejoicing in times of great joy with the hilarity and abandon of a boy, and in the hour of sore bereavement clasping and holding the hand with the touch of a mother.

'In miniature such is the man to his immediate co-workers; in former years to those on other stations he appeared to be carping and hypercritical; some of his letters were misunderstood, and were thought to be written with a caustic pen and a tone of command, but when the recipients of these came to know Bentley personally they felt, as one described it, "Like Paul, his letters were weighty and powerful, but, *unlike* him, his personal appearance was pleasing, and his speech was enticing." Without doubt Bentley was the most versatile man I have ever met. He was seen at his best at meal-times; as a story-teller brilliant, at repartee as sharp as a

razor, in conversation conversant with almost every subject touched, his mind seemed to retain whatsoever he had read. And yet he was not so much a wide reader—time forbad it—as a keen observer; his books, *Life on the Congo* and *Pioneering on the Congo*, as well as his articles in magazines and the *Medical Journal*, testify to his observant nature. After each return from itineration he would have some interesting incident to relate of animate or inanimate nature, or some trophy to show such as a coin, a stone, a nest, a grass or a "word." He was a philologist, naturalist, archæologist; in all of these subjects he could talk with brilliancy and to edification.

'Such was the man as his colleagues and general visitors saw him; but what shall we say of his work among the natives? Here, indeed, was his work. They were his soul and life, his joy and crown. Everything else was only something incidental, even to his literary and translation work. I think almost all of us felt if possible the natives all took up too much of his time, when such a great work as the translation of the Old Testament still remained to be done. He loved his people, his district, and he delighted in opening up new work, superintending the old, exhorting and reproving.

Certainly one would have liked to have seen the whole Bible translated by the one hand, as it would have given a uniformity to the diction, which could not be gained by men in different parts translating sections ; but Bentley never believed in makeshifts : what he had to do he believed in doing as thoroughly as he possibly could. He was convinced that the Old Testament should not be translated before one had a full understanding of the life and idiom of the people ; and as they had the New Testament already, there was not so great need for the Old. But apart from that, notwithstanding the literary work he had accomplished, his literary instinct was subservient to the pioneering, evangelistic, and pastoral instinct; as we know, however, he found time to translate some of the Old Testament books, and he was busily engaged on the work at home—indeed, all his furloughs were taken up with literary work. But on the station, the entertaining some official, doing ordinary registrar work, arranging some village palaver, settling disputes among Christians, administering daily judgments among his boys and girls—these called forth some of the finest traits of his character—courtesy, tact, patience, justice and love ; but nothing gave him greater joy or delight than when conversing with some

youthful inquirers. Night after night they waited their turn to speak to him; he cared not how often they came or how long they detained him, his time was theirs. From eight till almost any time up to midnight, if one went to see him he would invariably be found in close converse with a young inquirer; often have I seen him with his arm thrown around one of the boys as he tried to point out to him the way of salvation. No man knew quicker than he the first sign of grace in the heart of any of the boys—indeed, we sometimes thought he was too sanguine; and the backsliders, weak and vacillating, found in him a friend who would go after them time and again. He had no sympathy with sin or laziness, but he would plead again and again for some wayward one. Others would have been for excommunicating, but his voice pled for a longer retention on the suspension list so as to be held by a shorter rope, and be all the easier to bring in, "Try him again" or "wait and see" were often on his lips in connection with such cases.

One could thus go on writing of that great life as one's mind floods with memories of the past—of his generosity, his loyalty to the Society in retaining with a strong hand the sphere of our influence, and ever on the outlook for extending—

but I must for the present restrain and draw to a close by remarking on four very prominent points in his life and work—his great humility, whole-hearted fidelity, platform ability and deep spirituality.

'1. His great humility. Undoubtedly he had a wholesome pride in his work but none in himself; he was in some respects as humble-minded as a child. He thoroughly disliked publicity: he dreaded coming home for the appearing on platforms, or having a fuss made of him in the home; he liked to enter quietly if possible and take the most unobserved seat. He appreciated, certainly to the full, the many honours which were conferred upon him, but only for the sake of others, not for himself. They came to him unsought, and he thought himself most unworthy of them. I have among my papers a letter with very close intimacy last year when the honour of D.D. was to be conferred upon him, in which he says, among some depreciatory remarks: "You who know me best will smile at the announcement." On the contrary, we who knew him best felt how worthy indeed he was of such an honour, and we felt that the denomination did not know his value, or they would have honoured him more fully than they have done; but again I repeat, he himself never

coveted or sought honour; and when the Press was criticising him so severely with regard to his Belgian honour, they knew not the man they were criticising. The natives of Congo never had a warmer friend or more stout supporter than Dr. Bentley. Wathen district was *wholly free* from the cruelties and barbarities reported from other districts; the Truth around was progressing, people were being Christianised and civilised in a way which drew forth the appreciation and admiration of the Government, as official letters stated, and as the recent Commission to the country were compelled to admit. To refuse to wear the honour conferred on him for such betterment of the people and for his literary work in the Lower Congo would have been mere priggishness, and would have materially lessened his influence on behalf of the natives. He wore the honour and used it for the advantage and help of those natives on any occasion when such use could so help.

'2. His whole-hearted fidelity to the Lord's work. Of no one in Congo could it be more truly said that he spent his life for the people, and was spent in his Master's service.' He gave himself no holiday, vacation, or relaxation from work. When, very occasionally,

we had a social time for the young people, he entered into it as a boy, but wholly so that he might win them and have great influence with them. From morning to night while on the station he was busy, not taking what was thought to be the necessary siesta at mid-day. In itinerating he excelled, setting a pace which we younger men found it hard to follow. Not only would he take two or three long trips a year of from five to seven and eight weeks, but he would be out almost every week-end in some of the near villages ; and, as he often said, he accounted the great success of the Wathen work, humanly speaking, more to this method than to any other, for there the seed was sown, and he would bring back some boy or girl who in the future would become a teacher-evangelist in a village.

'3. His platform ability. Those who heard Bentley on the platform at home had no conception of his power in this direction. At home he felt strange, out of place, almost out of touch, with his audience, but in Congo all that was reversed. I always think a missionary's true setting is not deputation work at home, though the Churches judge a man too much in that way ; he should be seen in his native, natural surroundings : there is the missionary, not when he is put

up to speak largely about himself for half an hour. To see Bentley as he was, well, let me introduce you to the quarterly meetings held for the public on social questions on the uplift and civilisation of the people which must follow the reception of the gospel. He is at home in place and topic, time is no object, the people thoroughly understand him, and he as thoroughly understands them. Then how he warms up to his subject! With fire and fervency, exhorting and reproving, he kindles his audience. His dramatic, poetic, and musical instinct enable him to play upon the people. Now he gets opposition to his advanced hygienic suggestion, or he receives warm approval from the men as he describes pretty fully a woman slut, or equal approval from the women as he waxes hot against the sluggard and the lout. How they laugh as he describes the unnecessary bickerings between husband and wife, because the one takes that which belongs to the other! The hot indignation of the meeting is called forth as he denounces slavery, cruelty of any form, indifference to life and to the sick, and the warm glow of enthusiasm arises as he pictures Congo in the time of the millennium. Yes, it was a treat to hear Bentley on those occasions. Alas! that voice will be no longer heard in

Congo, until the trump of the Lord calls the sleepers to rise.

'4. His deep spirituality. His was a nature which did not require to spend hours on his knees, for his life was one long prayer. His work, I feel sure, was saturated through and through with prayer, and his life some six years ago was spared in answer to Mrs. Bentley's and his fervent prayer. His nature was warm without being sentimental, and his public prayers were full of wide, comprehensive grasp; when he conducted them we rose from our knees feeling that a child had been talking to his Father. His sermons were often full of inspiration, always full of help. Among the many I heard two stand out to-day. One was delivered, I think, five years ago, at the New Year United Communion Service, on "What owest thou to my Lord?" when the burden of our great debt to the Lord was brought home in a never-to-be forgotten way; and the other was, I believe, the last I heard him preach. It was at the great Annual Communion Service, December 29, 1903. The year had been one full of much misgiving; many hard lessons had been taught, but the meetings gave promise of a bright and happy future; a large debt was almost wiped out, and the Christians were just about to go back to their

1. TEACHERS WORKING UNDER THE WATHEN CHURCH, BUT NOT SUPPORTED BY THE B.M.S.
2. TWENTY OF THE TWENTY-FIVE DEACONS OF THE WATHEN CHURCH.

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various homes, then Bentley spoke on those three words, "Until He come." Never before did a message seem so inspired; indeed, it proved to be his last utterance to the gathered Church. How vividly he portrayed the certain coming of the Lord, the presentation of our work to Him, and the note of condemnation or approbation with which each one would be received! I can hear again those words in Congo, "Yavana Kekwiza," and his last word of exhortation to those who were not then ready to receive Christ's salvation while there was time, and to enter His blest service so that when He came they might too receive that word of commendation, "Well done!"

'Dr. Bentley is the last from Congo of those four who sailed for Congoland in April, 1879. He saw over 1,200 baptized in the Wathen Church, and a whole district of wild, barbarous people almost wholly evangelised and civilised, if not Christianised. What a grand reception he has had in the "Homeland!" Is it unscriptural to think that next to the warm reception by the Saviour Himself, he will have been surrounded by the forty odd missionaries and hundreds of Congo Christians who have already ascended to that land? And what a chorus of Hallelujahs as again the song is taken up "Unto Him who

hath loved us and washed us from our sins, to Him be glory for ever. Amen."

'God grant all His servants like faith to follow in his steps.

'With kind regards,

'I am, yours sincerely,

'JOHN BELL.'

'WATHEN STATION, THYSVILLE, B.M.S.,
'CONGO FREE STATE, SOUTH-WEST AFRICA.
'*January* 15, 1906.

'MY DEAR MRS. BENTLEY,—The news of your sad bereavement and our great loss reached us late on last Saturday evening. It plunged the whole station in intense grief; boys and girls alike from Dr. Bentley's district sat and cried, filling the station with their wailings and lamentations. But what is our sorrow compared with yours, and what can I say that can possibly allay your intense grief, or reconcile you to your irreparable loss? If praising your beloved husband's genius as a scholar, or zeal as a missionary, or self-sacrifice in the cause of Christ would do it, I could fill pages with sincere eulogy, but I fear I should only bring your great loss more vividly before you, and in so doing, intensify your sorrow. You have lost a husband who was a great missionary, a great

and honoured servant of Jesus Christ, and we have lost a colleague who towered head and shoulders above us, a colleague whom we admired, esteemed, loved, and delighted to see honoured by others; and the people of this district have lost a faithful and gifted teacher, a patient, tender father, a true leader and friend.

'The name of Holman Bentley will be handed down for many a year to come as the one who brought the light and liberty of the gospel of Jesus to a darkened and sin-bound people.

'Somehow I seem by the death of Dr. Bentley to have lost a something—a part of myself—that I am continually missing. Every now and again I pull myself up and say: "He is dead; he is dead," and then I feel stunned and overwhelmed. We were often talking of his return, and that this or that would be arranged, or settled on his arrival, and now he cannot come to us any more! I can scarcely believe he has gone from us; for months I have been looking forward to labouring by his side, and now he has entered into the joy of his Lord, and received the well-earned reward of the faithful, zealous servant.

'I am,

'Yours sincerely,

'J. H. Weeks.'

To the above letters I will now add the following, more or less fragmentary, reminiscences and tributes from various sources :—

'One remembers him as a studious and aspiring, earnest and persevering all-round boy. He did not know what failure was. One great feature was the great pains he bestowed in doing everything accurately and as well as it was in his power to do.'

'When I was a little boy Holman was the one to whom I looked up. And in later days I was glad to know that he was at hand to help my brother. His name will go down as one who has done good work for God, and it will ever bring to the minds of those who knew him loving recollections of a true friend.'

'His was indeed a self-forgetting life, and I feel it a privilege to have known him as intimately as I did, so many years ago.'

'You who know so well how arduous were his duties, will realise how well he deserves the rest of which he saw so little below, and into which we rejoice to think he has had so abundant an entrance.'

'A full and noble lifework. Those who knew him best loved him most. One felt such confidence in his brotherliness and sympathy,

especially in times of illness. His hopefulness and earnestness in Mission work were ever an inspiration.'

'A hallowed memory of a splendid life lived to the last in the Master's Service. How my thoughts go back to the early days! But there, I cannot write, my heart is sore, far more than I can tell you.'

'Always trying to remember the one great object of life—to seek to win others for Jesus. He never wasted time, never owned to fatigue when there was work to be done; never shrank from any task on account of difficulties or trouble, but ever sought to do them as well as they could be done.'

'I have never forgotten the few times that it was my privilege to come into close contact with Dr. Bentley and have been a better man and missionary because of him.'

'His example of earnestness, perseverance, and hopefulness was always an inspiration. I am sure that the whole-hearted devotion to the work of Christ in this land has made his memory very dear to large numbers. His place cannot be filled on the Lower Congo, and the example of consecrated zeal—such as he has left behind—will be sure to strengthen us and make us do all we can.'

'In him we have indeed an almost unparalleled example of concentrated toil and complete consecration to the Master's service, whilst the special features of his character which seem ever to have struck those who knew him most intimately, were his unselfish devotion to his work, his great hopefulness and his modesty.'

'He was so modest and retiring that it was not until people engaged in conversation with him that the extent of his knowledge was realised. There was hardly a subject that could be broached upon but he had made himself acquainted with it.'

'There was none of the self-conscious meekness that is so revolting. Religious sayings never came lightly from his lips; the waters of his religious life were too deep. His religion was part of his inner self.'

'Only "the day" can reveal all that he has done for his Master in the land which he loved more intensely than any one I have ever known.'

'As I realise the fact I feel that I have indeed lost one who has been to me more than a co-worker, who has allowed me to enter into his more immmediate circle of friends. The thought of our intercourse last week and the joy I had of being with him is precious.'

'A blessed memory—his addresses were so informing, so encouraging, and all delivered in such a gentle, humble way, that I feel proud to belong to the same Society as this great pioneer of Mission work in Africa, who after so many of his colleagues had fallen victims to the climate remained behind, holding on tenaciously to his life and work. And now he has gone to his high reward above. His work remains a permanent foundation on which all future workers on the Congo may build.'

'I have for long had profound admiration for him, which admiration has increased the more I have heard and known of his character and work. I have never heard any word spoken of him but words of affection and esteem. The wonderful work in the Wathen district will always be a lasting monument of his devotion, ability, and untiring zeal. He was indeed a great gift of God to the Church, and one of the noblest men that ever consecrated his life and talents to the Redeemer's Kingdom.'

'What a joy to have left behind such a fragrance as he has and to have been so highly honoured in the Master's Service!'

'A few glimpses have been enough to show me how strong was the love which bound you. It is indeed helpful on the highway of life to

know one who was so unweariedly working for the very highest end.'

'It will always be an inspiration, only the thought of such a life. I was thinking all through the service of the "abundant entrance" he must have had and the "gold, silver, and precious stones" that will always abide the fire.'

'It must be a joy to you that he lived to see his courageous and self-denying labours rewarded. It is marvellous what, in a short life, he was permitted to accomplish. His devotion carried all before it, even to the conquering of the deadly climate. Had he been dismayed in the early days, the whole position of the Mission would have been precarious.'

'I can never forget that it was Mr. Bentley's letter that first lifted my thought again to the home beyond, when I seemed to know no hope, but strangely fancied the Lord's face wore a frown towards me, and that every struggle was in vain.'

'It was only a few days ago I had a long and memorable conversation with Dr. Bentley about further work afield, in the land to which he had devoted his unselfish life, and for whose salvation he counted it all joy to endure priva-

tion, difficulty, and danger. We can only look back with thankfulness and joy on his life, wholly devoted to the Saviour and the good of others.'

'It seemed to me in London, at the Congress, that he looked like a soldier whose fight was over, whose work was done, just waiting for the home-call. He was so thin, so spent-looking, so shadowy—and now, how thin the veil, how slight the partition! He rests from his labours, and the work he did here will abide for ever, and his name will never be forgotten.'

'What a wonderful life your dear husband's has been! His home-call will occasion grief to thousands in this land, and in the land the other side of the sea, where he has made an incalculable difference. His influence for good will never be lost, but rather will increase with the passing years; for what nobler and more influential work can a man do than give a nation God's Word in their own tongue? and with unspeakable felicity he is now freed from the bonds and restrictions of the flesh in the immediate presence of his Lord, and the "Well done" has compensated him for all he has done and suffered here.'

'The loss to the Mission is very great, but we are so thankful for all he was permitted to do, and

for the way in which he has marked his impress on the Congo Mission. As I grow older I feel more and more how real is work of the other world, and how really the work of the other world is our true life work, and for which a few years of our sojourn on earth is but a probation and preparation.

'I felt the spell of his personality, with his wonderful powers of mind and will and still greater gifts of spirit, and marvel at his fine intellect and grasp which triumphed over the harassing worries of physical discomfort.'

I will only add the following letter to the Press from Professor Sibree :—

'To the Editor of the *Western Daily Press*.

'THE LATE DR. HOLMAN BENTLEY.

'Sir,—In the death of Dr. Holman Bentley science has suffered a double loss, for not only had he reduced to writing the language of the Congo district, and thus rendered invaluable service to the study of language in general, but he had also paid special attention to the remains of the pre-historic age of that part of the country in which his work lay. He had not only brought back with him a fine collection of stone imple-

ments, but up to the time of his death had been engaged in diligently comparing these relics with those found in other parts of the world, notably Egypt. It had been his intention, on returning to Africa, to make a more thorough investigation of the geological features of the country, with the view to ascertaining the age to which the stone implements belonged, and for this purpose he had been collecting information from different quarters. This, however, represented by no means the whole of his work in the domain of anthropology, for he had been a close observer of the manners and customs of the native population, and his thorough knowledge of the language enabled him to trace the development of primitive culture, and thus to throw light upon certain obscure points. Particularly interesting in this connection was the explanation that he gave of the processes of barter and commerce that find their counterpart in the usages of the early races of Europe. On other points the information that he gave was equally entertaining and instructive. The progress of civilisation is nowadays so rapid, and the ancient landmarks are so fast disappearing, that science can ill afford to lose a single investigator in the field of primitive culture, much less can she afford to lose such an investigator as Dr.

Bentley proved to be, peculiarly equipped as he was for work which requires not only an adequate knowledge of language and customs, but a sound critical faculty.

'E. SIBREE.'

THE END.

The red line indicates the exploration journeys taken by Dr. Bentley on the "Peace": the dotted red line the journeys made together with Mr. Grenfell.

Appendix

Literary Work

1887. Dictionary and Grammar of Congo Language.
Life on the Congo.
Congo Primer.
1893. New Testament in Congo.
1895. Appendix.
1898. Pioneering on the Congo.
Parts of the Old Testament—Genesis, Proverbs, Psalms.
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